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Critical Essays

of the

Seventeenth Century

Vol. III

1685–1700

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ROBERT WOLSELEY

PREFACE TO *VALENTINIAN, A TRAGEDY, AS 'TIS ALTER'D BY THE LATE EARL OF ROCHESTER*

1685

I AM desir'd to let the World know that my late Lord *Rochester* intended to have alter'd and corrected this Play much more than it is, before it had come abroad, and to have mended not only those Scenes of *Fletcher* which remain, but his own too, and the Model of the Plot it self. If, therefore, the Reader do not find it every where to answer the great Reputation of the Author, if he think the Plot too thin, or any of the Scenes too long, 'tis hop'd he will be so just to remember that he looks upon an unfinish'd Piece; and what faults soever of this or any other kind some may pretend to see, who cannot yet forgive my Lord the having had more Wit than themselves, we have all the reason imaginable to conclude from the correctness of his other Poetry, that, had he liv'd to put the last Hand to this, he wou'd have left true Criticks and impartial Judges no business but to admire, especially if we consider how much he has mended the old Play by that little he has done to it; for he had but just drawn it into a regular Form, and laid the Plane of what he further design'd, when his Countrey and his Friends had the irreparable misfortune to loose him. But as the loosest Negligence of a great Genius is infinitely preferable to that *obscura diligentia* of which *Terence* speaks, the obscure diligence and labour'd Ornaments of little Pretenders, and as the rudest Drawings of famous Hands have been always more esteem'd (especially among the knowing) than the most

perfect Pieces of ordinary Painters, the Publishers of *Valentinian* cou'd not but believe the World wou'd thank 'em for any thing that was of my Lord *Rochester*'s manner, tho' it might want some of those nicer Beauties, those Grace-strokes and finishing Touches, which are so remarkable both in his former and latter Writings: and yet as imperfect as *Valentinian* is left, I am of opinion his Enemies will not meet with that occasion in it for their Ill-nature, which perhaps they expect; for besides that my Lord has made it a Play, which he did not find it, the chief business of it (as *Fletcher* had contriv'd it) ending with the *Fourth Act*, and a new Design, which has no kind of relation to the other, is introduc'd in the *Fifth*, contrary to a Fundamental Rule of the Stage; I say, besides that 'tis now adorn'd with that necessary Beauty of a Play, the Unity of Action, and judiciously heighten'd and reform'd through the whole conduct of the Plot from what it was, those Scenes which my Lord has added have a gracefulness in the Cast, a justness in the Sence, and a nobleness in the Genius, altogether like himself, which (to do my Lord but a bare Right) is far beyond that of most men who write now, and equal even to the Fancy of *Fletcher*, which I think no man's can exceed; there is a chearfulness in it that is every where entertaining, and a Mettle that never tires. But as my Lord in the suiting of his Style to that of *Fletcher* (which he here seems to have endeavour'd, that the Play might look more of a Piece) cannot with any justice be deny'd the Glory of having reach'd his most admir'd Heights, and to have match'd him in his Fancy, which was his chief Excellence, so it must be also confess'd that my Lord's constant living at Court, and the Conversation of Persons of Quality, to which from his greenest Youth both his Birth and his Choice had accustom'd him, gave him some great Advantages above this so much and so justly applauded Author,—I mean a nicer knowledge

both of Men and Manners, an Air of good Breeding, and a Gentleman-like easiness in all he writ, to which *Fletcher*'s obscure Education and the mean Company he kept had made him wholly a Stranger. If it were at all proper to pursue a Comparison where there is so little Resemblance, tho' *Fletcher* might be allow'd some Preference in the skill of a Play-Wright (a thing my Lord had not much study'd) in the contrivance and working up of a passionate Scene, yet my Lord had so many other far more eminent Virtues to lay in the contrary Scale as must necessarily weigh down the Ballance; for sure there has not liv'd in many Ages, if ever, so extraordinary and, I think I may add, so useful a Person as most *Englishmen* know my Lord to have been, whether we consider the constant good Sence and the agreeable Mirth of his ordinary Conversation, or the vast Reach and Compass of his Invention, and the wonderful Depths of his retir'd Thoughts, the uncommon Graces of his Fashion, or the inimitable Turns of his Wit, the becoming gentleness, the bewitching softness of his Civility, or the force and fitness of his Satyre; for as he was both the Delight and the Wonder of Men, the Love and the Dotage of Women, so he was a continual Curb to Impertinence and the publick Censor of Folly. Never did Man stay in his Company un-entertain'd, or leave it un-instructed; never was his Understanding biass'd or his Pleasantness forc'd; never did he laugh in the wrong place, or prostitute his Sence to serve his Luxury; never did he stab into the Wounds of fallen Virtue with a base and cowardly Insult, or smooth the Face of prosperous Villany with Paint and Washes of a mercenary Wit; never did he spare a Fop for being rich, or flatter a Knave for being great. As most men had an Ambition (thinking it an indisputable Title to Wit) to be in the number of his Friends, so few were his Enemies, but such as did not know him, or such as hated him for what others lov'd him;

and never did he go among Strangers but he gain'd Admirers, if not Friends, and commonly of such who had been before prejudic'd against him. Never was his Talk thought too much, or his Visit too long; Enjoyment did but increase Appetite, and the more men had of his Company, the less willing they were to part with it. He had a Wit that cou'd make even his Spleen and his Ill-humour pleasant to his Friends; and the publick chiding of his Servants, which wou'd have been Ill-breeding and intolerable in any other man, became not only civil and inoffensive, but agreeable and entertaining in him: A Wit that cou'd please the most morose, perswade the most obstinate, and soften the most obdurate: A Wit whose Edge cou'd ease by cutting, and whose Point cou'd tickle while it prob'd: A Wit that us'd to nip in the very Bud the growing Fopperies of the Times, and keep down those Weeds and Suckers of Humanity; nor was it an Enemy to such only as are troublesom to men of sence in Conversation, but to those also (of a far worse Nature) that are destructive of publick Good and pernicious to the common Interest of Mankind,—that Vein of Knavery that has of late years run through all Orders and Degrees of men among us, spreading it self like a pestilential Poyson through the great and lesser Arteries of our seeming strong-built Leviathan, damping and corrupting the Blood, and choaking the very vital Spirits of the Kingdom.

I might here take occasion to point out in particular, and lash, as they deserve, those daily-increasing Vices and long uncorrected Follies which are our present Grievances: the Subject is but too fruitful and the Usefulness too apparent, nor cou'd I ever purchase Reputation at a cheaper rate; nothing is more easie than to pull off the thin Veil and bare the vileness of those odious Practices which some who are ready at any time to *run with a Multitude to do mischief* applaud for the highest Virtue and

Merit; nothing requires less skill than to baffle and expose to universal Contempt those slight and trivial Notions, which others, who seem *given over to believe a Lye*, cry up for Master-pieces of Wit and Reason; to name 'em for Arguments is to ridicule 'em, and but to state 'em right is to confute 'em. But common prudence will teach a man not to hurt himself, while he vainly endeavours the good of others; for as there never was any Time or Countrey that wanted Satyre so much, that cou'd bear it so little as ours, so the men I wou'd reform are a sort of harden'd, irreclaimable Blockheads, whose Understandings seem perfect *Solids*, as dead to Wit and as insensible of Reason as if their Souls and their Bodies (according to *Hobbes*'s Philosophy) were both made of the same stuff and equally impenetrable; so ty'd to their little Prejudices, and so wilful in their Blindness, that were they in a Storm at Sea, that threaten'd every moment those *Lives and Fortunes* of which they are sometimes so unnecessarily prodigal, it wou'd be impossible to make 'em own there were a breath of Wind stirring, unless it suited with their Humours or was to the purpose of their Folly. With them Seeing in some Cases is not Believing, and the most perfect sence they have, if it cross their Inclination, must pass for an *Irish Evidence.* I shall leave therefore to their own Conduct and Destiny this forlorn Hope of Ignorance and Stupidity, and return to what I was saying of my Lord *Rochester.*

He had a Wit that was accompanied with an unaffected greatness of Mind, and a natural Love to Justice and Truth; a Wit that was in perpetual War with Knavery, and ever attacking those kind of Vices most, whose malignity was like to be most diffusive, such as tended more immediately to the prejudice of publick Bodies and were of a common Nusance to the happiness of humane kind. Never was his Pen drawn but on the side of good

Sence, and usually imploy'd, like the Arms of the ancient Heroes, to stop the progress of arbitrary Oppression, and beat down the Bruitishness of headstrong Will; to do his King and Countrey justice upon such publick State-Thieves as wou'd beggar a Kingdom to enrich themselves, who, abusing the Confidence and undeserving the Favour of a gracious Prince, will not be asham'd to maintain the cheating of their Master by the robbing and starving of their fellow-Servants, and under the best Form of Government in the World blush not to live upon the spoyl of others, till by their impudent Violations of Right they grow like Beasts of Prey, *Hostes humani Generis.* These were the Vermin whom, to his eternal Honour, his Pen was continually pricking and goading: A Pen, if not so happy in the Success, as generous in the Aim as either the Sword of *Theseus* or the Club of *Hercules*, nor was it less sharp than that, or less weighty than this. If he did not take so much care of himself as he ought, he had the Humanity however to wish well to others; and I think I may truly affirm, he did the World as much good by a right application of Satyre, as he hurt himself by a wrong pursuit of Pleasure.

I must not here forget that a considerable time before his last Sickness his Wit began to take a more serious Bent, and to frame and fashion it self to publick Business; he begun to inform himself of the Wisdom of our Laws and the excellent Constitution of the *English* Government, and to speak in the House of Peers with general approbation; he was inquisitive after all kind of Histories that concern'd *England*, both ancient and modern, and set himself to read the Journals of Parliament Proceedings. In effect, he seem'd to study nothing more than which way to make that great Understanding God had given him most useful to his Countrey, and I am confident, had he liv'd, his riper Age wou'd have serv'd it as much as his

Youth had diverted it. Add to this the generousness of his Temper and the affability of his good Sence; the willingness he still show'd to raise the oppress'd, and the pleasure he took to humble the proud; the constant readiness of his Parts, and that great presence of Mind, that never let him want a fit and pertinent Answer to the most sudden and unexpected Question (a Talent as useful as 'tis rare); the admirable skill he was Master of, to countermine the Plots of his Enemies, and break through the Traps that were laid for him, to work himself out of the entanglement of unlucky Accidents, and repair the Indiscretions of his Youth by the quickness and fineness of his Wit; the strang facility he had to talk to all Capacities in their own Dialect, and make himself good Company to all kind of People at all times; so that if we wou'd find a Soul to resemble that beautiful Portraiture of Man, with which *Lucretius*, according to his sublime manner of Description, complements his Friend *Memmius*, when he says that *Venus*, the Goddess of Beauty, and second Cause of all things, had form'd him to excel, and that upon all occasions, in every necessary Grace and Virtue; I say, if we wou'd justifie this charming Picture, and clear it from flattery even to humane Nature, we must set it by my late *Lord Rochester*; of him it may be truly said in the fullest sence of the words,

—— Quem tu, Dea, tempore in omni,
Omnibus ornatum voluisti excellere rebus.

What last, and most of all, deserves admiration in my Lord was his Poetry, which alone is Subject enough for perpetual Panegyrick. But the Character of it is so generally known; it has so eminently distinguish'd it self from that of other men by a thousand irresistible Beauties; every Body is so well acquainted with it by the effect it has had upon 'em, that to trace and single out the several Graces may seem a Task as superfluous as to describe to

a Lover the Lines and Features of his Mistress's Face. 'Tis sufficient to observe that his Poetry, like himself, was all Original, and has a stamp so particular, so unlike any thing that has been writ before, that, as it disdain'd all servile imitation and copying from others, so neither is it capable, in my opinion, of being copy'd, any more than the manner of his Discourse could be copy'd; the Excellencies are too many and too masterly; on the other side the Faults are few, and those inconsiderable; their Eyes must be better than ordinary, who can see the minute spots with which so bright a Jewel is stain'd, or rather set off, for those it has are of the kind which *Horace* says can never offend:

—— Quas aut incuria fudit,
Aut humana parum cavit Natura.

Such little Negligences as Humanity cannot be exempt from, and such as perhaps were necessary to make his Lines run natural and easie; for as nothing is more disagreeable either in Verse or Prose than a slovenly loosness of Style, so on the other hand too nice a Correctness will be apt to deaden the Life, and make the Piece too stiff; between these two Extreams is the just Character of my *Lord Rochester*'s Poetry to be found, nor do I know any thing that the severest Critick, who will be impartial, can object, unless he will say (as some have done) that there is not altogether so much strength and closeness in my Lord's Style as in that of one of his Friends, a Person of great Quality and Worth, whom I think it not proper to name, because he has never yet publickly own'd any of his Writings, tho' none have been more generally or more justly admir'd; but if my Lord's Sence be not always so strong and full (for often it is) as that of this Honourable Person, his Friend, yet in revenge the Spirit that diffuses it self through the Whole, and warms and animates every Part, the newness of his Thought, the liveliness of his

Expression, the purity of his Phrase, and the delicacy of his Turn is admirable; if he does not say so much in so little Compass, yet he says always enough to please; what he wants in Force is supply'd in Grace, and where he has not this strength and fulness of Sence that is so much his Friend's particular Talent, he has Touches that are more affecting, so that when we do not find it, we do not miss it. To conclude this Point, his Poetry has every where a Tincture of that unaccountable Charm in his Fashion and Conversation, that peculiar Becomingness in all he said and did, that drew the Eyes and won the Hearts of all who came near him.

The Reader may perhaps judge a Discourse of this nature very unnecessary; I am apt to believe no unprejudic'd man, who has read my *Lord Rochester*'s Writings, will think they can need a Defence, or that any of his Enemies shou'd be so forsaken both of common Justice and common Sence, so blind in their Vanity, and so unskilful in their Malice, as to tax him with any failing in *Wit*: He whose Name was the very Mark it pass'd by, and who seem'd to have in his Keeping the *Privy-Seal* of Sence; and yet some such there are, who, having no way to be remarkable above the ordinary Level of Mankind but by being singular, will needs assault him on this his strongest side, and give occasion for more than has been yet said in his favour; a sort of men, who have been always so in Love with themselves, as never to be able to see any merit or hear any praise but their own, looking on what is paid elsewhere, how due soever, as so much stollen from them, and, mistaking their own Talents as much as they undervalue other men's, are perpetually doing that most which least becomes 'em; in spite of the friendly Admonitions of daily Satyre and the Remonstrances of almost all the Town, tir'd with the Persecution, they persist in an untoward spiritless Vein of Rhiming, being

perhaps too considerable (in their own opinions) to design the pleasing any Body but themselves; and so far certainly they are in the Right, in that they do not aim at what they can never effect: Men who have got the *Form* of Poetry without the *Power*, and by a laborious Insipidness, a polish'd Dulness, seem not design'd to't as a Diversion, but condemn'd to 't as a Penance for some yet unexpiated Sin of their Forefathers: Men who, like old Lovers, are curst with a strong Inclination and weak Abilities, to whom nothing is more unlucky than an opportunity to satisfie their unnatural Longings; fatal to them is the Favour of their Muse, especially if (because they have ill Meens and ugly Faces) they set up for *Satyres;* when most they wou'd serve the Lust of their Spite, they do but betray the Impotence of their Wit; but they despair to put off that sorry stock they have, till by under-rating other men's they have starv'd the Market; by disgracing Commodities of an intrinsick Worth and staple Price, they hope to recommend their Gawze and Tinsel. In the number of these *Well-wishers* to Verse and men that are *towards Wit*, we may reckon (and that without doing him any Wrong) the conceal'd Author of the late *Essay upon Poetry*, who has in Print made a most unjust and (to his power) a most malicious Reflexion upon my *Lord Rochester*'s since his death,—a Reflexion not more ungenerous in the time and manner of publishing it, than absurd in the sence and matter, as I shall presently make appear; for, having always profess'd to be my Lord's Friend, I cannot but think my self oblig'd upon this occasion to vindicate his Memory from so undeserv'd a Libel. Had my Lord been living, I am of opinion we had never seen either the *Reflexion* or the *Essay*. This Author (whoever he is, or how fond soever he may be of his own Parts) cou'd not but know himself as unfit to play a Prize in Satyre with my late *Lord Rochester*, as feeble *Troilus* was heretofore

to fight single with *Achilles*, and therefore probably wou'd not have provok'd a man who cou'd have beat him to the ground with one stroke of his Pen, and have for ever crush'd his creeping Wit; Or had he had Bravery enough to attack my Lord while he was alive, he wou'd certainly have had Honour enough to let him alone when he was dead; but as he cou'd not but be sensible, any false Criticism upon my Lord's Poetry during his Life must needs turn to the Critick's shame, so neither cou'd he hope while my Lord liv'd an Indempnity for the dulness of his own; it wou'd have been to no purpose then to pick up Scraps of *Bossu, Rapin, Boileau, Mr. Dryden*'s Prefaces and Table-Talk (for every one of these have a large share in his *Essay*), and send 'em into the World for a new *Art of Poetry*, especially after he had defac'd the native Beauty of their thoughts by new casting 'em in the Mould of a flat, unmusical Verse, and put out all the spirit by the coldness and deadness of his Expression; my Lord wou'd never have suffer'd such a Coyner and Debaser of other men's Bullion to take upon him the Authority of a Say-Master, nor his light alloy'd Mettle to pass upon the Town for sterling; he, who by his great Mastery in Satyre seem'd to be particularly trusted with the Justice of *Apollo*, did not use to let the Purloiners of Wit retail their stollen Goods to the People without bringing 'em to open shame, nor *Quacks* and *Mountebanks* in Poetry, furnish'd with nothing but a few borrow'd *Recipes*, to put on the Face and Gravity, and appear in publick with the pride and positiveness of Doctors; the vainest Pretenders in his time, the most confident *Essayers*, cow'd and aw'd under the known force of a sence so superiour to their own, were glad at any rate to keep their empty Heads out of Observation, as the Fowl of a whole Countrey creep into the Bushes when an Eagle hangs hovering above 'em. If ever they attempted to make Verses, 'twas with the same

secrecy that others make Love, and none were troubled with the sight of 'em but those who had the ill fortune to be their particular Friends; however they might sometimes lye under the suspicion of Poetry, they took care there shou'd never be Evidence enough to convict 'em, and happy did they then think themselves, if, in parting with their vain hope of passing for Wits, they cou'd escape being mark'd out for Fops; 'tis true, some few remain'd incorrigible even then, as always there will be some whom no kind of good sence how forcible soever can make any Impression upon; but, for the most part, Ignorance begun to wear the Mask of Modesty, which is certainly her most becoming Dress, and men were contented to be no wiser than God had made 'em; at least those who wanted Wit did not contrive, as the manner now is, to make their dulness remarkable by exposing to the World their painful and fruitless Endeavours after it, but were willing to be valued for some other Talent, perhaps more beneficial, which Nature in her equitable distribution of things had given 'em instead of it. Thus was Vanity kept within some tolerable Bounds, while my *Lord Rochester* liv'd, by the general Dread of a Pen so severe and impartial. But his Death has prov'd a Jubilee to the little Witlings of the Town, by which they have got Indulgence for a thousand Fopperies, more mischievous and more senceless than were ever yet imported from *France*, and as much empty Rhime as they are capable of committing as long as they live; nor have they spar'd to use this *Poetical Licence* to the utmost extent of men's patience: Never was there known so many Versifyers, and so few Poets; every Ass that's Romantick believes he's inspir'd, and none have been so forward to teach others as those who cannot write themselves; every man is ready to be a Judge, but few will be at the trouble to understand, and none are more blind to the faults of their own Poetry than those who are

so sharp-sighted in other men's. Every Fop that falls in Love thinks he has a Right to make Songs, and all kind of People that are gifted with the least knowledge of *Latin* and *Greek* pretend to translate; the most reverenc'd Authors of Antiquity have not been able to escape the Conceitedness of *Essayers*, nor *Hudibras* himself, that admirable Original, his little Apers, tho' so artless are their Imitations, so unlike and so liveless are their Copies, that 'twere impossible to guess after what Hands they drew, if their Vanity did not take care to inform us in the Title-Page.

For Satyre, that most needful part of our Poetry, it has of late been more abus'd, and is grown more degenerate than any other; most commonly, like a Sword in the hands of a Mad-man, it runs a Tilt at all manner of Persons without any sort of distinction or reason; and so ill-guided is this furious Career, that the Thrusts are most aim'd where the Enemy is best arm'd. Womens Reputations, of what Quality or Conduct soever, have been reckon'd as lawful Game as Watchmen's Heads; and 'tis thought as glorious a piece of Gallantry by some of our modern Sparks to libel a Woman of Honour, as to kill a Constable who is doing his duty. Justice is not in their Natures, and all kind of useful knowledge lyes out of the way of their Breeding. Slander therefore is their Wit, and Dresse is their Learning; Pleasure their Principle, and Interest their God. But how infamous, insipid, or ignorant soever the Authors themselves are, their Satyres want not sting, for upon no better Evidence than those poetical Fables and palpable Forgeries, the poor Ladies, whose little Plots they pretend to discover, are either made Prisoners in their own Houses, or banish'd into the Countrey during Life; tho' so ill-colour'd generally is the Spite, and so utterly void of all common probability are the brutal Censures that stuff up their licentious

Lampoons, that 'tis not easie to determine which of the two deserve most to be laugh'd at, the *Fantastical Foplings* that write 'em or the *Cautious Coxcombs* that believe 'em. But what is yet more wonderful, this Practice is applauded and carry'd on by those only who esteem the gaining of handsom Women the greatest Felicity the Nature of man is capable of, make it the Burden of all their empty Talk and the Businesse of their Lives; now this sole design of theirs these able Gentlemen endeavour to bring about, by doing what they can upon all occasions to fright and indeed force the whole Sex from any Commerce with men, and make all Access to 'em difficult, which is just as wise as if a man that lov'd *Setting*, as soon as he had found his Game, instead of observing the Wind and preparing his Nets, shou'd hoop and hollow, and throw Stones at 'em.

This is one Branch of our present Satyre, which has much of the Nature and more of the Wit of *Jack-Pudding*'s Buffoon'ry, for as he, tho' he flings Dirt at every body, is angry with no body, so do these Bully-Writers perpetually assault People from whom they never receiv'd the least Provocation, and murder their good Names in cold Blood. The other is of a more serious Cast, but withal 'tis more malicious; and falling in with the baseness of a corrupt Age, does infinitely more mischief; this is made to wound where it ought to defend and cover where it shou'd expose, to contradict the very first Elements of Morality, and bid defiance to the unalterable Essence of things, by calling *Good Evil and Evil Good.* Heroes have been hung up *in Effigie* who deserv'd Statues, while the worst of men have been *cens'd* with the Praises of demi-Gods; Betrayers of their Trust and little servers of Turns have been idoliz'd, while Patriots of an unstain'd Honour and unreproachable Conduct, who were in truth the *Dii Tutelares* of their distracted Countrey, have been openly blasphem'd with an impudent and witlesse Scurrility; in

a word, those chiefly have been the Authors of Satyres who ought to be the Subject, and 'tis become much more scandalous to be thought to write the best, than to be put into the most abusive.

But, as I was saying, among these *Wou'd be* Poets of the Times, who have scarce any one Talent proper for the Calling, none is more eminent than the Author of the fore-nam'd *Essay*, who, while he pretends without the least colour of Authority either from Art or Nature to be the Muses Legislator, deserves not the Office of their Cryer, with so hoarse and so untunable a Voice has he republish'd the poetical Laws, not of his own, but of their true Representatives framing; however, he hopes to distinguish himself from the crowd of common Writers by a proud and spiteful Attempt upon the Reputation of my late *Lord Rochester*, whose one Example is worth all his Precepts. But 'tis time to examine what he objects, and see if there be any Wit in his Anger: the Maxim he lays down for the foundation of his Satyre is, *That Bawdry cannot be Wit;* his words are these (Page the *6th* of his *Essay*):

> *Bawdry bare-fac'd, that poor Pretence to Wit,*
> *Such nauseous Songs*, &c.

This is new Doctrine among men of Sence, but an old thread-bare Saying among unthinking half-witted People, who judge without examining and talk without meaning. I'le answer for him, he did not learn this of any of the Authors I mention'd before, to whom he has been so much oblig'd for most of the other Parts of his *Essay;* it never yet came into any man's Head who pretended to be a Critick, except this *Essayer's*, that the Wit of a Poet was to be measur'd by the worth of his Subject, and that when this was bad, that must be so too: the manner of treating his Subject has been hitherto thought the true Test, for as an ill Poet will depresse and disgrace the

highest, so a good one will raise and dignifie the lowest; some of the most masterly Strokes in *Virgil* are his Descriptions of the Employment of Bees, the Jealousie of Bulls, the Lust of Horses and Boars, the cutting down of a Tree, the Working of Ants, and the Swimming and Hissing of Snakes, things little and unlovely in themselves, but noble and beautiful in the Pictures he gives us of 'em. True Genius, like the *Anima Mundi* which some of the Ancients believ'd, will enter into the hardest and dryest thing, enrich the most barren Soyl, and inform the meanest and most uncomely matter; nothing within the vast Immensity of Nature is so devoid of Grace or so remote from Sence but will obey the Formings of his plastick Heat and feel the Operations of his vivifying Power, which, when it pleases, can enliven the deadest Lump, beautifie the vilest Dirt, and sweeten the most offensive Filth; this is a Spirit that blows where it lists, and like the Philosopher's Stone converts into it self whatsoever it touches. Nay, the baser, the emptier, the obscurer, the fouler, and the less susceptible of Ornament the Subject appears to be, the more is the Poet's Praise, who can infuse dignity and breath beauty upon it, who can hide all the natural deformities in the fashion of his Dresse, supply all the wants with his own plenty, and by a poetical Dæmonianism possesse it with the spirit of good sence and gracefulnesse, or who, as *Horace* says of *Homer*, can fetch Light out of Smoak, Roses out of Dunghils, and give a kind of Life to the Inanimate, by the force of that divine and supernatural Virtue which, if we will believe *Ovid*, is the Gift of all who are truely Poets:

Est Deus in Nobis, agitante calescimus illo,
Sedibus ætheriis Spiritus ille venit.

There are no two things in the World that have a nearer affinity and resemblance than Poetry and Painting; the Parallel between 'em runs throughout; every Body

knows the old Adage, That Poetry is *Pictura loquens* and Painting is *Poema silens*; that paints with Words and this speaks by Colours; nay, the very Definition of the one, as I shall show in the pursuit of this Argument, will agree to the other; the Art in both is the same, only the Tools it works with are different. To apply this now to the present purpose: as, in the examining of a Picture, the Question is not what is drawn, but how the Draught is design'd and the colouring laid, 'tis not at all material whether the Object that is set before us be in it self amiable or deform'd, but whether the Painter has well or ill imitated that Part of Nature which he pretends to copy; so in the judging of a Poem or Verses of any kind the Subject is no otherwise consider'd than as it serves to prove the truth and justifie the force of the Description; for, as *Mr. Dryden* has rightly observ'd in the Preface to his *Tyrannick Love, There is as much of Art and as near an Imitation of Nature in a Lazar as in a Venus.* If the Shapings be just, and the Trimming proper, no matter for the coarsenesse of the Stuffe; in all true Poetry, let the Subject or Matter of the Poem be in it self never so great or so good, 'tis still the Fashion that makes the Value, as in the selling of Filigren men reckon more for the Work than for the Silver. Were the *Essayer* as well read in *Latin* Authors as he seems to be in *French*, or, if his Learning cou'd carry him no further, as I much suspect by his Style, wou'd he have vouchsaf'd but to look on a Translation of *Horace*'s *Art of Poetry* before he had put out his own, he might have sav'd himself the shame of so fundamental a mistake as this crude Objection is guilty of; where plain common sence fail'd him, *Horace* wou'd have inform'd him that Poets and Painters have been always allow'd to represent whatever they wou'd:

——Pictoribus atque Poetis
Quidlibet audendi semper fuit æqua potestas.

I know *Horace* brings in this as an Objection to what he is discoursing, but he speaks of it at the same time as a general Maxim, and owns it himself for an undoubted Truth, for the very next Verse is:

Scimus, & hanc veniam petimusque damusque vicissim.

He only restrains it at last with one Exception, which, they say, confirms a Rule:

Sed non ut placidis coeant immitia, non ut
Serpentes avibus geminentur, tigribus agni.

The sence of which is: I grant, says He, that Poets and Painters have an equal right to design and draw what they please, provided their Draughts and their Models be fram'd and govern'd by the nature of things; they must not joyn Serpents with Doves, nor Tygers with Lambs; that is, they must not couple Contraries, and show impossible Chimæras. This is all the Caution *Horace* gives either to Poets or Painters; he exempts nothing that is natural from the imitation of Art, nor does he set any thing out of the reach of Fancy that is within the bounds of Truth. I know very well that some natural Objects are not in themselves pleasant, nor others fit to be expos'd to publick View, but Decency is one thing, and Poetry and Painting, or the skill of Drawing and Describing, is another. I have been told that in the late Auction at *Whitehall*, among other Pieces was set up the Picture of a Man fleaing, with one Arm quite unskin'd, of which tho' every body dislik'd the sight, yet did no body therefore discommend the Painting. But to come closer to the *Essayer*'s Cavil, there has not been a very famous Painter in the World who has not made either Pictures or Drawings of Men or Women in Postures and with Parts obscene, not one of any Note but like my *Lord Rochester* he has been guilty of *barefac'd Bawdry*. What does he think of the *Hercules* of *Pierino del Vaga*, the *Venus* and the *Cupid* of *Annibal Caraccio*, the *Leda* of

Parmegiano, the *Diana* and the *Andromeda* of *Titian*, the sleeping *Venus* of *Corregio*, the *Paris* of *Raphael Urbin*, and the *Leda* of *Michael Angelo*? Will he say that these great Master-pieces of Genius and Skill, that have been Ornaments for the Closets of Princes, are *poor Pretences* to Painting, because they are obscene? Or, to presse this Argument a little further, will he condemn all the old Statues that are yet remaining in the World (for the Parallel holds here too, and his Rule reaches even them), the Labour of so many differently excelling Hands and the Wonder of so many years, because most of 'em are not only naked but obscene Figures? Particularly, wou'd he for this Reason deface the *Hercules* that is now at *Rome* in the Palace of *Farnese*, a Work more valuable than the *Capitol*? Can we hope no Quarter for that fam'd *Apollo*, and that so much prais'd *Laocoon*, which are plac'd in the Garden of the *Vatican*? Will he not pardon the two *Alexanders* that are in white Marble upon *Monte Cavallo*, one done by *Praxiteles* and the other by *Phidias*, the *Meleager* (that Miracle of Art) in the Palace of *Pichini*, the *Mars*, the *Orpheus*, the *Bacchus*, and the dying *Seneca* in the Palace of *Burghese*, with many others too numerous to name, that have stood so long the shame and the despair of modern and the Glory of ancient Artists, who imploy'd as much skill and thought it as necessary to perfect and make apparent the obscene Parts as any other whatever? Must then these venerable Relicks of Antiquity, that have escap'd the Barbarousnesse of *Goths* and *Vandals*, fall a Sacrifice at last to the grosser and lesse pardonable Ignorance of a whimsical Reformer? Wou'd he have men pound 'em to dust to humour his Caprice, or must we say that *Nudities* are *poor Pretences* to Sculpture? We may say it indeed with as much truth and justice as he can say that my *Lord Rochester's* Songs are *nauseous*, or that his other obscene Verses are a *poor Pretence to Wit*; for none

of the ancient Statuaries, none of those admir'd Painters whom I have nam'd were greater Masters in their kind than my Lord was in his; none of 'em cou'd take the Air of Nature truer; none of 'em knew how to show indecent and ill-favour'd Objects after a more agreeable and delightful manner, nor have any of 'em grac'd their obscene Representations with a bolder strength or a fuller Life. But lastly, to bring this Discourse yet more home to him, and give Instances even in Poetry it self, what opinion has he of *Juvenal, Martial, Petronius Arbiter, Catullus, Tibullus, Ovid,* nay, and *Horace* too, whose Sence is often obscene, and sometimes their very Words,—which I mention the rather because he seems to lay a great Weight upon the *Barefac'dness* of my *Lord Rochester*'s *Bawdry,* and the downright obsceneness of his Expression,—I say, what Sentence will he pass on these so long lasting and ever honour'd Names? Are these men *poor Pretenders* to Wit? Or is the *Essayer* a *poor Pretender* to Criticism? Shall we think their Poetry, that has pass'd the Test of so many Ages, or his Judgement faulty?—especially when we find our Understandings still own the truth of their instructive sence, and all our Passions feel the Charm of their Versification; when we find the kindest propensions of Nature and all the sensibility of our Souls waking at the Call of that celestial Musick, our Cares laid asleep, and even our Pains intermitted by the unaccountable Magick of their powerful Descriptions. Shall we now take his word that such kind of Painting is not Wit, contrary to the opinion of all good Criticks that have ever been, and refuse to be pleas'd because he's out of humour? Shall we believe him, as the *Papists* do their Priests, contrary to all the possible Evidence of Reason, and trust him against all the certainty of Sence? Shall we lay aside the Prescriptions of *Aristotle, Longinus,* and *Horace,* contrary to the Experience of near *2000* years, and practise hereafter by his new Dispensatory?

Will he set up his own Authority against that of all Antiquity, and oppose his single Fancy to the unanimous Judgement of Mankind? 'Twill be great, no doubt, and becoming the absoluteness of so famous a Dictator, who is giving Laws to Invention, setting out the Boundaries of Sence, and teaching the World to understand.

I confess Bawdry alone, that is, obscene Words thrown out at random like Bullies Oaths, without Design, Order, or Application, is as *poor a Pretence* to Wit as 'tis to good Manners, or as Pride and Ill-nature without either Genius or Learning is to the writing of *poetical Essays*. But he cannot be suppos'd to charge any of my *Lord Rochester*'s Verses with such a Barrenness as this; the notorious Evidence of Fact and the contrary Testimony of a whole Nation wou'd fly too full in his Face. No, the chief Crime, as I intimated before, is the *Barefac'dness* of their *Bawdry*, which the *Essayer*'s great *Bashfulness* is not able to suffer; to put an end, therefore, to the Dispute, and because I believe nothing has so long shelter'd the lamentable weakness of his ignorant Censure from common Apprehensions but the doubtful and unsettled signification of this Term, *Wit*, I shall bring it to the scrutiny of a Definition, which is the only sure way to decide the matter; and notwithstanding all that has been hitherto discours'd, if it can bear that Test, I shall be so far from reproaching him with the newness of his Notion, that I will be one of the first to thank him for the discovery. I take Wit then in Poetry, or poetical Wit (for that is the Wit here in Question), to be nothing else but *a true and lively expression of Nature*. By *Nature* I do not only mean all sorts of material Objects and every species of Substance whatsoever, but also general Notions and abstracted Truths, such as exist only in the Minds of men and in the property and relation of things one to another,—in short, whatever has a Being of any kind; the other Terms of the Definition are,

I think, so plain as not to need Explication; *true* this expression of Nature must be that it may gain our Reason, and *lively* that it may affect our Passions: upon the whole matter, to draw and describe things that either are not in Nature or things that are otherwise than they are, or to represent 'em heavily (as the *Essayer* does) and colour 'em dully, this is the only false Wit and the vicious Poetry; on the other side, to make a very like Picture of any thing that really exists is the perfection as well of Poetry as Painting,—where, by the way, the Reader may take notice that one Definition will serve both, and also include the Art of Sculpture, which has the same general End and is guided by the same general Rules with the other two. For the rest, if the *Essayer* dislike the Definition which I have here propos'd, when he makes his particular Exceptions to it, I shall further clear it, and show that there is nothing either in the ancient or modern Wit but what is comprehended within it; or if he thinks he can give a juster himself, when what he shall offer appears to be so, I am so perfectly well satisfy'd of the goodness of my Cause, he will find me always ready to joyn issue with him either upon that or any other. In the mean time, let us compare his Criticism with this, and see how out of Countenance and how simply 'twill then look; it runs thus: *Bawdry barefac'd*, says he, *is a poor Pretence to Wit*, that is, *Bawdry barefac'd is a poor Pretence to a true and lively Expression of Nature.*

Risum teneatis, Amici?

No Reader can be so dull as not presently to perceive the *barefac'd* Contradiction and see the transparent folly of this Assertion; there needs now no long Train of Discourse nor any far-fetch'd Arguments to refute it; 'tis a piece of self-evident Nonsence (I can give it no other Name without miscalling it) and Blunder at first sight; for

why an obscene Action may not be describ'd, or an obscene Imagination express'd, *truly* and *lively*, or why either of 'em is not capable of the Graces of correct Versification as well as any other thing, is for ever unintelligible.

But because some may be apt to suspect, how little ground soever they have for it, that I have fram'd this Definition on purpose to make the *Essayer*'s Notion ridiculous; if he believes his Cause will fare the better for being remov'd into another Court, I am not only willing to gratifie him in this Particular, but shall carry it to be try'd even there where the Judge is his Friend; I shall afresh examine his Criticism by a Definition of Wit which *Mr. Dryden* has given us, whose Judgement in any thing that relates to Poetry, I suppose, he will not dispute, and whose Arbitration (if we may measure his Confidence in him by his Obligations to him) he has no manner of Reason to decline. The Definition I mean is in the Preface to his *Opera*, call'd the *State of Innocence*; the words are these: *Wit*, says *Mr. Dryden*, *is a Propriety of Thoughts and Words*—Or *Thoughts and Words elegantly adapted to the Subject.* The judicious Reader will easily observe that this Definition, tho' it differ in sound, is much the same in sence with mine; what *Mr. Dryden* calls *Propriety*, I have call'd *true Expression*, and that *elegantly adapted* in the explication of his answers directly to what I intend by *lively* in mine; so that had I remember'd that (which I did not) before I form'd my own, I shou'd not have troubled my self to make another. But let us now joyn the *Essayer*'s Criticism and *Mr. Dryden*'s Definition together, and try what new species of Absurdity this unnatural Mixture will produce; we must then read it thus: *Bawdry barefac'd is a poor Pretence to a Propriety of Thoughts and Words.* He that can make sence of this Proposition may go far to solve the grossest Impossibilities

in Transubstantiation, and reconcile all the Antipathies in Nature. *Bawdry barefac'd*, whatever defect it has, cannot want Propriety; this is the very fault that uses to be objected to it by such nice Gentlemen as the *Essayer*, viz. that the Thoughts and Words are too proper and too expressive of what they wou'd have understood, so that according to this Definition there is nothing in the World that comes nearer the nature of Wit than *Bawdry barefac'd*.

I hope no Body will so quite mistake the design of this Discourse as to think that I have been all this while pleading the Cause of *Bawdry*, as a thing in it self, and upon all occasions, allowable and fit; this was never in my thoughts, and far from my meaning, nor is it any part of the Question between the *Essayer* and me. He brands not *Bawdry* for being indecent and immoral, but for being unwitty; so unlucky a hand he has at Criticism, when he trusts to his own Understanding, and being himself but a Stranger upon *Parnassus* will needs pretend to show others the way; he says indeed that *Bawdry* in Songs and every where else is unfit, but his Reason is not because it contradicts universally-receiv'd Custom and wounds common Civility, or because it may offend Age and corrupt Youth, but because, as he imagines, 'tis a *poor Pretence to Wit*, and *palls* instead of *raising Appetite*, that is, in plain *English*, he dislikes it because it does no hurt; all that I have undertaken, therefore, or am oblig'd to defend, is the *Wit* of my *Lord Rochester*'s obscene Writings, not the *Manners*; for even Wit it self, as it may be sometimes unseasonable and impertinent, so at other times it may be also libertine, unjust, ungrateful, and every way immoral, yet still 'tis Wit, and we may then say of it, as the *Civilians* do of uncanonical Marriages, *Quod fieri non debet, factum valet*; of this nature is my *Lord Rochester*'s obscene Poetry, which, tho' it be much the best that ever was seen of the Kind, and Wit without the least Allay either of

Flatnesse or Fustian, must yet be reckon'd among the Extravagancies of his Youth and the carelesse Gayeties of his Pen, when he was carry'd away with the precipitancy of that *Liber spiritus*, as *Petronius* calls it, the too great fervour of his universal Genius, and the overfruitfulness of an unbounded Fancy. But tho' his obscene Poetry cannot be directly justified in point of Decency, it may however be a little excus'd, and where it cannot challenge Approbation it may perhaps deserve Pardon, if we consider not only when 'twas writ, but also to whom 'twas address'd; for as those Painters I mention'd before, tho' they liv'd in Popish Countreys, did not, I suppose, intend their obscene Pieces for the service of the Church, or to be set up at the Market-Cross, but probably for the secret Apartments of some particular Persons, who cou'd look unscandaliz'd on a skilful Imitation of any thing that was natural with the freedom and the reflexion of Philosophers, so neither did my *Lord Rochester* design those Songs the *Essayer* is so offended with to be sung for *Anthems* in the *King*'s-*Chappel*, any more than he did his other obscene Writings (however they may have been since abus'd) for the Cabinets of Ladies, or the Closets of Divines, or for any publick or common Entertainment whatever, but for the private Diversion of those happy Few whom he us'd to charm with his Company and honour with his Friendship.

As to the *Essayer*'s calling my Lord's Songs *nauseous*, besides what has been already answer'd, he cannot but know that my Lord writ a great number without the least obscenenesse in 'em, which are not only far better than any he is capable of making (for to say no more of 'em were to praise 'em poorly), but so correct and yet so natural, so easily wrought and so justly finish'd, with that elegant Aptnesse in the Words and that unordinary Beauty in the Thoughts, as no other man ever did or can exceed.

His last Exception to my Lord's Poetry is that the

grosse Obscenenesse of it *palls* instead of *raising Appetite*, where he finds fault with that only thing that (were his Exception just) wou'd excuse it to much the major part of Mankind; for that which chiefly makes Bawdry in so ill Repute is because it has been always believ'd an Incentive to such Desires as Divines tell us shou'd rather be curb'd than encourag'd, and apt to bring Thoughts into peoples Heads which ought not and perhaps otherwise never wou'd come there: now, if barefac'd Bawdry has this particular property, that it does not hint these forbidden Thoughts nor stir those unlawful Desires, but on the contrary flattens and stifles 'em, 'tis much more innocent, and consequently fitter to be us'd or at least to be pardon'd, than any other. But he's beside the Cushion again, and as wide here of the Mark he aims at as he was before; there are indeed scarce more Lines than Mistakes in this half Paragraph that concerns my *Lord Rochester*; he cannot see, it seems, at all but by other men's Eyes, for he stumbles at every Step when he ventures to walk without his Guides. However, let us take a view of this his legitimate Sence in his own Dresse; the lines are these:

> But obscene Words, too grosse to move Desire,
> Like heaps of Fuel do but choak the Fire.
> That Author's Name has undeserved Praise
> Who pall'd the Appetite he meant to raise.

In the first place, What does that *ed* in *undeserved* do there? I know no businesse it has, unlesse it be to crutch a lame Verse and each out a scanty Sence, for the Word that is now us'd is *undeserv'd*. I shou'd not take notice of so trivial a thing as this, but that I have to do with a Giver of Rules and a magisterial Correcter of other men, tho' upon the observing of such little Niceties does all the Musick of Numbers depend; but the Refinement of our Versification is a sort of Criticism which the *Essayer* (if we may judge of his Knowledge by his Practice) seems yet

to learn, for never was there such a Pack of stiff ill-sounding Rhimes put together as his *Essay* is stuff'd with; to add therefore to his other Collections, let him remember hereafter that Verses have Feet given 'em, either to walk graceful and smooth, and sometimes with Majesty and State, like *Virgil*'s, or to run light and easie, like *Ovid*'s, not to stand stock-still, like *Dr. Donne*'s, or to hobble like indigested Prose; that the counting of the Syllables is the least part of the Poet's Work, in the turning either of a soft or a sonorous Line; that the *eds* went away with the *for-to's* and the *untils*, in that general Rout that fell on the whole Body of the *thereons*, the *thereins*, and the *therebys*, when those useful *Expletives*, the *althos* and the *untos*, and those most convenient *Synalœphas*, *'midst*, *'mongst*, *'gainst*, and *'twixt*, were every one cut off; which dismal slaughter was follow'd with the utter extirpation of the ancient House of the *hereofs* and the *therefroms*, &c. Nor is this Reformation the arbitrary Fancy of a few who wou'd impose their own private Opinions and Practice upon the rest of their Countreymen, but grounded on the Authority of *Horace*, who tells us in his Epistle *de Arte Poeticâ*, That present Use is the final Judge of Language (the Verse is too well known to need quoting), and on the common Reason of Mankind, which forbids us those antiquated Words and obsolete Idioms of Speech whose Worth time has worn out, how well soever they may seem to stop a Gap in Verse and suit our shapelesse immature Conceptions; for what is grown pedantick and unbecoming when 'tis spoke will not have a jot the better grace for being writ down.

In the next place, To what purpose does he keep such a pudder here about *moving Desire* and *raising Appetite*? Does he think that all kind of obscene Poetry is design'd to *raise Appetite*? Does he not know that obscene Satyre (of which nature are most of my *Lord Rochester*'s obscene

Writings, and particularly several of his Songs) has a quite different end, and is so far from being intended to raise, that the whole force of it is generally turn'd to restrain *Appetite*, and keep it within due Bounds, to reprove the unjust Designs and check the Excesses of that lawlesse Tyrant? If, therefore, some of my *Lord Rochester*'s Songs shou'd misse a Mark which they neither did nor ought to aim at, I believe no body but the *Essayer* will think it a Fault. But to strike at the root of his Objection, what does he mean by saying, That obscene Words are *too grosse to move Desire*?—he might say with as much sence that pious Words are too good to move Devotion; 'tis impossible that any Words shou'd come too near the nature of the things they are to represent, when the design is to touch our Passions by that representation, for if there be an attraction of any sort in the nature of the things, the more truly they are describ'd to us, the more is that attractive virtue drawn forth and made to exert it self; so that what he calls *grossenesse* is here the chief power, the main weight and stamp of the Poet's Expression, by which a just and full Notion of what he wou'd have us apprehend is more clearly and more forcibly impress'd upon the Imagination; Propriety being (as I have already show'd) the very Essence of Wit, and the only possible way to win the Understanding and engage the Affections of a rational Creature. 'Tis true, as I hinted once before, obscene Words us'd unnecessarily, and with as little pertinence as some of our modern *Enthusiasts* use godly Phrases and Scripture Expressions, when six of 'em sometimes shall signifie but one thing (if by great chance they signifie any thing), will provoke indeed the wrong way, and nauseate instead of affecting; but if a man of Wit has the ranging and applying of the one, and a man of Learning and Judgement the other, both will operate according to their natural tendency, that is, these will

incline to Virtue and those to Vice; the short and true state of the Case is this: all depends upon the Genius and Art of the Writer, for as an obscene Thought, if it be not livelily painted, will have but a small or perhaps no effect upon the Mind of the Reader, according to the proportion of flatness in the Expression, so a chast or a pious Meditation, if it has the same disadvantage, will work as little. Thus (to come to his own Allusion) Heaps of Fuel, when they are carelesly thrown on, and after a disorderly manner cramm'd together, do no doubt choak and dead a Fire, but if they are regularly laid and artificially pil'd up, they will as much enliven and increase it, a Demonstration of which he may see every *Twenty ninth of May* in a Bonefire; 'tis not then the Heaps or Quantity of Fuel, but the unskilful placing, that puts out the Fire. We may, therefore, with a very little trouble turn the small Shot of his *Simile* upon him, for adding but a word or two it will speak a direct contrary sence, as thus:

But obscene Words, if right apply'd, raise and inflame Desire,
As Heaps of Fuel, plac'd with skill, make and maintain the Fire.

For a further Proof of this, when his squeamish Fit is over, I wou'd recommend to his Perusal *Aloisia Sigea*, or if that be too hard for him because 'tis writ in *Latin*, let him read *l'Escole des Filles*; and if the obscene Words and Descriptions he will meet with there do not raise his Appetite, the World will be apt to conclude it not only very dull but absolutely dead; and as bad as his Poetry is, his Reader will be better entertain'd than his Mistress.

If I were now of a humour to please my self with finding other men's Faults, it were no hard matter to make the *Essayer* give my *Lord Rochester* his Revenge. I shou'd then ask him from what Ballad he took that Heroical height

of Expression and that noble Turn of a Verse which we find in the first page of his *Essay*:

——None there are
That can the least with Poetry compare ;—

How long *Cadance* and *Foibles* have been *English* words ? Or whether, despairing to get any Credit by his Wit, he speaks *French*, like the *Kings of Brentford, to show his Breeding*? Why he, who in Page the *4th* thinks it so easie to rob the Ancients, will stoop so low as in most of the following to borrow from the Moderns ? Why he suffers a *Muse*, who has so sowr a Countenance and so ungraceful a Fashion as his, to play the Wag, and be such a merry Grig as she sometimes aims to appear ? Or in plain terms, what is the meaning of all that forc'd insipid Raillery that fills his *18th* Page, for 'tis not more dull than 'tis unintelligible ? I shou'd also desire to be inform'd by what new *Grammar* he construes the six last Lines of his *7th* Page : And when we may hope to know from him what the Consequence will be, if in an *Elegy*

A just Coherence be not made
Between each Thought, *&c.*,

For he has left it at present, as *Mr. Bayes* did his Plot, for the Reader to find out of himself, if he will ; and some have been guessing that 'tis much the same as when in an *Essay* the like *Coherence* is not observ'd. Lastly, how comes his *Eagle* in Page the *11th*, which we expected by the pompous preparation wou'd presently have mounted out of sight, to fly so like a *Buzzard* and flounce like a *Fish*? But 'tis no great Wonder, I confesse, that an *Eagle*, who seems afraid to get upon her Wings, and warily *considers the Perils of her Case* in so doing,—which, by the way, is a Phrase fitter for an *Affidavit* than a *Poem*, and as natural an Image as if he had describ'd a Man afraid to walk,—but, I say, 'tis not

at all strange that such a cautious *Eagle*, who is so distrustful of her Wings, shou'd keep so near the Ground in her Flight.

'Tis as easie as 'twou'd perhaps be pleasant to enlarge this *poetical Catechism*, for there is yet good store of Materials left; but this little may suffice at present to give the World a Taste of the *Essayer*'s Abilities, and how fit he is to correct my *Lord Rochester* or to teach us; for I find this *Preface* is already run out beyond the ordinary Length of such Discourses, nor was it at all intended (this being not worth the trouble) to blast a Wit which will die of it self in a little time, but to do Right to that which is likely to live as long as our *Language*, and defend a Man whose Person I was ever naturally inclin'd to love, and whose Friendship I shall upon all occasions be proud to own; a Man whose Wit cou'd never have wanted the assistance of mine, nor a much better, either to recommend or justifie it, were not that Part of his Writings the *Essayer* has censur'd of such an unhappy Kind as few will examine; otherwise, as to what concerns the Poetry of 'em, they are their own best Encomium and Defence, no Body being able to say so much for 'em as they do for themselves. To conclude, Whatever Faults my *Lord Rochester* might have, I am confident the *Essayer* is the only Person in the Kingdom who wou'd have gone about to look for 'em in his *Wit*: the Applause of that was so universal, and the manner so agreeable, none ever dislik'd it but those who fear'd it, none ever decry'd it but those who envied it.

SIR WILLIAM TEMPLE

1690

I. *AN ESSAY UPON THE ANCIENT AND MODERN LEARNING*

WHOEVER Converses much among the Old Books will be something hard to please among the New; yet these must have their Part too in the leisure of an idle man, and have, many of them, their Beauties as well as their Defaults. Those of Story, or Relations of Matter of Fact, have a value from their Substance as much as from their Form, and the variety of Events is seldom without Entertainment or Instruction, how indifferently soever the Tale is told. Other sorts of Writings have little of esteem but what they receive from the Wit, Learning, or Genius of the Authors, and are seldom met with of any excellency, because they do but trace over the Paths that have been beaten by the Ancients, or Comment, Critick, and Flourish upon them, and are at best but Copies after those Originals, unless upon Subjects never touched by them, such as are all that relate to the different Constitutions of Religions, Laws, or Governments in several Countries, with all matters of Controversie that arise upon them.

Two Pieces that have lately pleased me, abstracted from any of these Subjects, are, one in *English* upon the *Antediluvian* World, and another in *French* upon the *Plurality of Worlds*; one Writ by a Divine, and the other by a Gentleman, but both very finely in their several Kinds and upon their several Subjects, which would have made very poor

work in common hands. I was so pleased with the last (I mean the Fashion of it rather than the Matter, which is old and beaten) that I enquired for what else I could of the same hand, till I met with a small Piece concerning Poesy, which gave me the same exception to both these Authors, whom I should otherwise have been very partial to. For the first could not end his Learned Treatise without a Panegyrick of Modern Learning and Knowledge in comparison of the Ancient: And the other falls so grosly into the censure of the Old Poetry and preference of the New, that I could not read either of these Strains without some indignation, which no quality among men is so apt to raise in me as sufficiency, the worst composition out of the pride and ignorance of mankind. But these Two, being not the only Persons of the Age that defend these Opinions, it may be worth examining how far either Reason or Experience can be allowed to plead or determin in their favour.

The Force of all that I have met with upon this Subject, either in Talk or Writing is, First, as to Knowledge, That we must have more than the Ancients, because we have the Advantage both of theirs and our own, which is commonly illustrated by the Similitude of a Dwarfs standing upon a Gyants shoulders, and seeing more or farther than he. Next, as to Wit or Genius, that Nature being still the same, these must be much at a Rate in all Ages, at least in the same Clymates, as the Growth and Size of Plants and Animals commonly are; And if both these are allowed, they think the Cause is gained. But I cannot tell why we should conclude that the Ancient Writers had not as much Advantage from the Knowledge of others that were Ancient to them, as we have from those that are Ancient to us. The Invention of Printing has not, perhaps, multiplied Books, but only the Copies of them; and if we believe there were Six Hundred Thousand in the Library of

Ptolomy, we shall hardly pretend to equal it by any of ours, nor, perhaps, by all put together; I mean so many Originals that have lived any time, and thereby given Testimony of their having been thought worth preserving. For the Scribblers are infinite, that like Mushrooms or Flys are born and dye in small circles of time; whereas Books, like Proverbs, receive their Chief Value from the Stamp and Esteem of Ages through which they have passed. Besides the account of this Library at *Alexandria*, and others very Voluminous in the lesser *Asia* and *Rome*, we have frequent mention of Ancient Writers in many of those Books which we now call Ancient, both Philosophers and Historians. 'Tis true that besides what we have in Scripture concerning the Original and Progress of the *Jewish* Nation, all that passed in the rest of our World before the *Trojan* War is either sunk in the depths of time, wrapt up in the mysteries of Fables, or so maimed by the want of Testimonies and loss of Authors that it appears to us in too obscure a shade to make any Judgment upon it. For the Fragments of *Manethon* about the Antiquities of *Egypt*, the Relations in *Justin* concerning the *Scythian* Empire, and many others in *Herodotus* and *Diodorus Siculus*, as well as the Records of *China*, make such Excursions beyond the periods of time given us by the Holy Scriptures that we are not allowed to reason upon them. And this disagreement it self, after so great a part of the World became Christian, may have contributed to the loss of many Ancient Authors. For *Solomon* tells us, even in his Time, of Writing many Books there was no end; and whoever considers the Subject and the Stile of *Job*, which by many is thought more ancient than *Moses*, will hardly think it was written in an Age or Country that wanted either Books or Learning; and yet he speaks of the Ancients then, and their Wisdome, as we do now.

But if any should so very rashly and presumptuously con-

clude, That there were few Books before those we have either Extant or upon Record, yet that cannot argue there was no Knowledge or Learning before those periods of time, whereof they give us the short account. Books may be helps to Learning and Knowledge, and make it more common and diffused; but I doubt whether they are necessary ones or no, or much advance any other Science beyond the particular Records of Actions or Registers of time; and these, perhaps, might be as long preserved without them, by the care and exactness of Tradition in the long Successions of certain Races of men with whom they were intrusted. So in *Mexico* and *Peru*, before the least use or mention of Letters, there was remaining among them the knowledge of what had passed in those mighty Nations and Governments for many Ages. Whereas in *Ireland*, that is said to have flourished in Books and Learning before they had much Progress in *Gaul* or *Britany*, there are now hardly any Traces left of what passed there before the Conquest made of that Country by the *English* in *Henry* the Second's Time. A strange but plain Demonstration how Knowledge and Ignorance, as well as Civility and Barbarism, may succeed each other in the several Countries of the World, how much better the Records of time may be kept by Tradition in one Country than Writing in another, and how much we owe to those Learned Languages of *Greek* and *Latin*, without which, for ought I know, the World in all these *Western* Parts would hardly be known to have been above five or six Hundred Years old, nor any certainty remain of what passed in it before that time.

'Tis true, in the *Eastern* Regions, there seems to have been a general Custom of the Priests in each Country having been either by their own Choice, or by Design of the Governments, the perpetual Conservers of Knowledge and Story. Only in *China* this last was committed particularly to certain Officers of State, who were appointed or

continued upon every accession to that Crown to Register distinctly the times and memorable Events of each Reign. In *Ethiopia*, *Egypt*, *Caldea*, *Persia*, *Syria*, *Judea*, these Cares were committed wholly to the Priests, who were not less diligent in the Registers of Times and Actions than in the Study and Successive Propagation thereby of all Natural *Science* and *Philosophy*. Whether this was managed by Letters, or Tradition, or by both, 'tis certain the Ancient Colledges, or Societies of Priests, were mighty Reservoirs or Lakes of Knowledge, into which some streams entred perhaps every Age from the Observations or Inventions of any great Spirits or transcendent Genius's that happened to rise among them : And nothing was lost out of these Stores, since the part of conserving what others have gained, either in Knowledge or Empire, is as common and easy as the other is hard and rare among men.

In these Soyls were planted and cultivated those mighty growths of *Astronomy*, *Astrology*, *Magick*, *Geometry*, Natural *Philosophy*, and Ancient *Story*. From these Sources *Orpheus*, *Homer*, *Lycurgus*, *Pythagoras*, *Plato*, and others of the Ancients are acknowledged to have drawn all those Depths of Knowledge or Learning which have made them so Renowned in all succeeding Ages. I make a Distinction between these Two, taking Knowledge to be properly meant of things that are generally agreed to be true by Consent of those that first found them out or have been since instructed in them, but Learning is the Knowledge of the different and contested Opinions of men in former Ages, and about which they have perhaps never agreed in any ; and this makes so much of one and so little of the other in the World.

Now to judge, Whether the Ancients or Moderns can be probably thought to have made the greatest Progress in the Search and Discoveries of the vast Region of Truth and Nature, it will be worth inquiring, What Guides have

been used, and what Labours imploy'd, by the one and the other in these Noble Travels and Pursuits.

The Modern Scholars have their usual Recourse to the Universities of their Countries; some few, it may be, to those of their Neighbours; and this in quest of Books rather than Men for their Guides, though these are living and those in comparison but dead Instructors, which, like a Hand with an Inscription, can point out the straight way upon the Road, but can neither tell you the next Turnings, resolve your Doubts, or answer your Questions, like a Guide that has traced it over, and perhaps knows it as well as his Chamber. And who are these dead Guides we seek in our Journey? They are at best but some few Authors that remain among us of a great many that wrote in Greek and Latine from the Age of *Hypocrates* to that of *Marcus Antoninus*, which reaches not much above Six Hundred Years. Before that time I know none, besides some Poets, some Fables, and some few Epistles; and since that time I know very few that can pretend to be Authors, rather than Transcribers or Commentators of the Ancient Learning. Now, to consider at what Sources our Ancients drew their Water, and with what unwearied Pains, 'Tis evident *Thales* and *Pythagoras* were the Two Founders of the *Grecian* Philosophy: the First gave Beginning to the *Ionick* Sect and the other to the *Itallick*, out of which all the others celebrated in *Greece* or *Rome* were derived or composed. *Thales* was the First of the *Sophi*, or Wise men, Famous in *Greece*, and is said to have learned his *Astronomy*, *Geometry*, *Astrology*, *Theology*, in his Travels from his Country, *Miletus*, to *Ægypt*, *Phœnicia*, *Crete*, and *Delphos*. *Pythagoras* was the Father of Philosophers and of the Vertues, having in Modesty chosen the Name of a Lover of Wisdom rather than of Wise, and having first introduced the Names of the Four Cardinal Vertues, and given them the Place and R nk they have held ever since

in the World. Of these Two Mighty men remain no Writings at all, for those Golden Verses that go under the Name of *Pythagoras* are generally rejected as spurious, like many other Fragments of *Sybils* or Old Poets, and some entire Poems that run with Ancient Names: Nor is it agreed, Whether he ever left any thing written to his Scholars or Contemporaries or whether all that learn't of him did it not by the Ear and Memory, and all that remained of him for some succeeding Ages were not by Tradition. But whether these ever writ or no, they were the Fountains out of which the following *Greek* Philosophers drew all those Streams that have since watered the Studies of the Learned World, and furnished the Voluminous Writings of so many Sects as passed afterwards under the common Name of Philosophers.

As there were Guides to those that we call Ancients, so there were others that were Guides to them, in whose Search they travelled far and laboured long.

There is nothing more agreed than, That all the Learning of the *Greeks* was deduced Originally from *Egypt* or *Phœnicia*; but, Whether theirs might not have flourished to that Degree it did by the Commerce of the *Ethiopians*, *Chaldæans*, *Arabians*, and *Indians* is not so evident, though I am very apt to believe it; and to most of these Regions some of the *Grecians* travelled in Search of those Golden Mines of Learning and Knowledge. Not to mention the Voyages of *Orpheus*, *Musæus*, *Lycurgus*, *Thales*, *Solon*, *Democritus*, *Herodotus*, *Plato*, and that vain Sophist, *Apollonius*, who was but an Ape of the Ancient Philosophers, I shall only trace those of *Pythagoras*, who seems of all others to have gone the farthest upon this Design, and to have brought home the greatest Treasures. He went first to *Egypt*, where he spent Two and Twenty Years in Study and Conversation among the several Colledges of Priests in *Memphis*, *Thebes*, and *Heliopolis*,

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⟨and⟩ was initiated in all their several Mysteries, in order to gain Admittance and Instruction in the Learning and Sciences that were there in their highest Ascendent. Twelve Years he spent in *Babylon* and in the Studies and Learning of the Priests or *Magi* of the *Chaldæans*. Besides these long abodes in those Two Regions, celebrated for ancient Learning, and where one Author, according to their Calculations, says, He gained the Observations of innumerable Ages, He Travelled likewise upon the same sent in *Æthiopia*, *Arabia*, *India*, to *Crete*, to *Delphos*, and to all the Oracles that were Renowned in any of these Regions.

What sort of Mortals some of those may have been that he went so far to seek, I shall only endeavour to Trace out by the most ancient Accounts that are given of the *Indian Brachmans*, since those of the Learned or Sages in the other Countries occur more frequent in Story. These were all of one Race or Tribe, that was kept chast from any other mixture, and were dedicated wholly to the Service of the Gods, to the Studies of Wisdom and Nature, and to the Councel of their Princes. There was not only particular care taken of their Birth and Nurture, but even from their Conception. For when a Woman among them was known to have Conceived, much thought and diligence was imployed about her Diet and Entertainments, so far as to furnish her with pleasant imaginations, to compose her mind and her sleeps with the best temper during the time she carried her Burthen. This I take to be a strain beyond all the *Grecian* Wit, or the Constitutions even of their imaginary Law-givers, who began their cares of Mankind only after their Birth, and none before. Those of the *Brachmans* continued in the same Degree for their Education and Instruction, in which, and their Studies and Discipline of their Colledges, or separate abodes in Woods and Fields, they spent Thirty Seven Years. Their

Learning and Institutions were unwritten, and only traditional among themselves by a perpetual Succession. Their Opinions in Natural Philosophy were, That the World was round, That it had a Beginning and would have an end, but reckoned both by immense periods of time; That the Author of it was a Spirit or a Mind that pervaded the whole Universe and was diffused through all the Parts of it. They held the Transmigration of Souls, and some used discourses of Infernal Mansions, in many things like those of *Plato*. Their Moral Philosophy consisted chiefly in preventing all Diseases or Distempers of the Body, from which they esteemed the perturbation of mind in a great measure to arise. Then in composing the Mind, and exempting it from all anxious Cares, esteeming the troublesome and sollicitous thoughts about Past and Future to be like so many Dreams, and no more to be regarded. They despised both life and death, pleasure and pain, or at least thought them perfectly indifferent. Their Justice was exact and exemplary, their Temperance so great that they lived upon Rice or Herbs, and upon nothing that had sensitive Life. If they fell sick, they counted it such a Mark of Intemperance that they would frequently dye out of Shame and Sullenness, but many lived a Hundred and Fifty, and some Two Hundred Years.

Their Wisdom was so highly esteemed that some of them were always imployed to follow the Courts of their Kings, to advise them upon all Occasions, and instruct them in Justice and Piety; and upon this Regard *Calanus* and some others are said to have followed the Camp of *Alexander* after his Conquest of one of their Kings. The Magical Operations reported of them are so wonderful that they must either be wholly disbelieved, or will make easie way for the credit of all those that we so often meet with in the later Relations of the *Indies*. Above all the

rest, their Fortitude was most admirable in their Patience and Endurance of all Evils, of Pain, and of Death; some standing, sitting, lying, without any Motion, whole dayes together in the scorching Sun; others standing whole nights upon one Leg, and holding up a heavy piece of Wood or Stone in both hands without ever moving, which might be done upon some sort of Penances usual among them. They frequently ended their Lives by their own Choice and not necessity, and most usually by Fire; some upon Sickness, others upon Misfortunes, some upon meer satiety of Life; so *Calanus*, in *Alexander*'s time, burn't himself publickly upon growing old and infirm, *Zormanochages*, in the time of *Augustus*, upon his constant Health and Felicity, and to prevent his living so long as to fall into Diseases or Misfortunes. These were the *Brachmans* of *India*, by the most Ancient Relations remaining of them, and which, Compared with our Modern, since Navigation and Trade have discovered so much of those vast Countries, make it easie to conjecture that the present *Baniams* have derived from them many of their Customs and Opinions, which are still very like them after the course of Two Thousand Years. For how long Nations, without the Changes introduced by Conquest, may continue in the same Customs, Institutions, and Opinions, will be easily observed in the Stories of the *Peruvians* and *Mexicans*, of the *Chineses* and *Scythians*: These last being described by *Herodotus* to lodge always in Carts, and to feed commonly upon the Milk of Mares, as the *Tartars* are reported to do at this time in many Parts of those Vast *Northern* Regions.

From these Famous *Indians* it seems to me most probable that *Pythagoras* learn't, and transported into *Greece* and *Italy*, the greatest part of his Natural and Moral Philosophy, rather than from the *Ægyptians*, as is commonly supposed; For I have not observed any mention of the Transmigration of Souls held among the *Ægyptians* more ancient than the

time of *Pythagoras*: On the contrary, *Orpheus* is said to have brought out of *Egypt* all his Mystical Theology, with the Stories of the *Stygian* Lake, *Charon*, the Infernal Judges, which were wrought up by the succeeding Poets (with a Mixture of the *Cretan* Tales or Traditions) into that part of the *Pagan* Religion so long observed by the *Greeks* and *Romans*. Now, 'tis obvious that this was in all parts very different from the *Pythagorean* Opinion of Transmigration, which, though it was preserved long among some of the succeeding Philosophers, yet never entered into the vulgar Belief of *Greece* or *Italy*.

Nor does it seem unlikely that the *Ægyptians* themselves might have drawn much of their Learning from the *Indians*, for they are observed in some Authors to have done it from the *Æthiopians*; and Chronologers, I think, agree that these were a Colony that came anciently from the River *Indus*, and planted themselves upon that Part of *Africa* which from their Name was afterward called *Æthiopia*, and in probability brought their Learning and their Customs with them. The *Phœnicians* are likewise said to have been anciently a Colony that came from the *Red Sea*, and planted themselves upon the *Mediterranean*, and from thence spread so far the Fame of their Learning and their Navigations.

To strengthen this Conjecture of much Learning being derived from such remote and ancient Fountains as the *Indies* and perhaps *China*, it may be asserted with great Evidence that, though we know little of the Antiquities of *India* beyond *Alexander*'s time, yet those of *China* are the oldest that any where pretend to any fair Records: For these are agreed by the Missionary Jesuits to extend so far above Four Thousand Years, and with such Appearance of clear and undeniable Testimonies, that those Religious Men themselves, rather than question their Truth by finding them contrary to the vulgar Chronology of the Scripture, are content to have recourse to that of the

Septuagint, and thereby to salve the Appearances in those Records of the *Chineses*. Now though we have been deprived the knowledge of what Course Learning may have held, and to what heights it may have soared, in that vast Region, and during so great Antiquity of time, by reason of the Savage Ambition of one of their Kings, who, desirous to begin the Period of History from his own Reign, ordered all Books to be burnt, except those of Physick and Agriculture,—so that what we have remaining besides of that wise and ancient Nation is but what was either by chance or by private Industry rescued out of that publick Calamity, among which were a Copy of the Records and Successions of the Crown,—yet it is observable and agreed that, as the Opinions of the Learned among them are at present, so they were anciently divided into two Sects, whereof one held the Transmigration of Souls, and the other the Eternity of Matter, comparing the World to a great Mass of Metal out of which some Parts are continually made up into a Thousand various Figures, and after certain Periods melted down again into the same Mass. That there were many Volumes written of old in Natural Philosophy among them. That near the Age of *Socrates* lived their Great and Renowned *Confutius*, who began the same Design of reclaiming men from the useless and endless Speculations of Nature to those of Morality. But with this Difference, that the Bent of the *Grecian* seemed to be chiefly upon the Happiness of private Men or Families, but that of the *Chinese* upon the good Temperament and Felicity of such Kingdoms or Governments as that was, and is known to have continued for several Thousands of Years, and may be properly called a Government of Learned men, since no other are admitted into Charges of the State.

For my own part, I am much inclined to believe that, in these Remote Regions, not only *Pythagoras* learn't the first Principles both of his Natural and Moral Philosophy,

but that those of *Democritus*, who Travelled into *Ægypt*, *Caldæa*, and *India*, and whose Doctrines were after improved by *Epicurus*, might have been derived from the same Fountains, and that long before them both *Lycurgus*, who likewise Travelled into *India*, brought from thence also the Chief Principles of his Laws and Politicks, so much Renowned in the World.

For whoever observes the Account already given of the Ancient *Indian* and *Chinese* Learning and Opinions will easily find among them the Seeds of all these *Grecian* Productions and Institutions: As the Transmigration of Souls and the four Cardinal Vertues; The long Silence enjoyned his Scholars, and Propagation of their Doctrines by Tradition rather than Letters, and Abstinence from all Meats that had Animal Life, introduced by *Pythagoras*; The Eternity of Matter, with perpetual changes of Form, the Indolence of Body, and Tranquility of Mind, by *Epicurus*; And among those of *Lycurgus*, the care of Education from the Birth of Children, the *Austere* Temperance of Diet, the patient endurance of Toil and Pain, the neglect or contempt of Life, the use of Gold and Silver only in their Temples, the Defence of Commerce with Strangers, and several others, by him established among the *Spartans*, seem all to be wholly *Indian*, and different from any Race or Vein of Thought and Imagination that have ever appeared in *Greece*, either in that Age or any since.

It may look like a Paradox to deduce Learning from Regions accounted commonly so barbarous and rude. And 'tis true the generality of People were always so in those *Eastern* Countries, and their lives wholly turned to Agriculture, to Mechanicks, or to Trades; but this does not hinder particular Races or Successions of Men, the design of whose thought and time was turned wholly to Learning and Knowledge, from having been what they are

reepresented and what they deserve to be esteemed, since among the *Gauls*, the *Goths*, and the *Peruvians* themselves, there have been such Races of Men under the Names of *Druids*, *Bards*, *Amautas*, *Runers*, and other barbarous Appellations.

Besides, I know no Circumstances like to Contribute more to the advancement of Knowledge and Learning among men than exact Temperance in their Races, great pureness of Air, and equality of Clymate, long Tranquility of Empire or Government: And all these we may justly allow to those *Eastern* Regions more than any others we are acquainted with, at least till the Conquests made by the *Tartars* upon both *India* and *China* in the later Centuries. However, it may be as pardonable to derive some Parts of Learning from thence as to go so far for the Game of *Chess*, which some Curious and Learned men have deduced from *India* into *Europe* by Two several Roads, that is, by *Persia* into *Greece*, and by *Arabia* into *Africk* and *Spain*.

Thus much I thought might be allowed me to say, for the giving some Idæa of what those Sages or Learned Men were, or may have been, who were Ancients to those that are Ancients to us. Now to observe what these have been is more easy and obvious. The most ancient *Grecians* that we are at all acquainted with after *Lycurgus*, who was certainly a great Philosopher as well as Law-giver, were the seven Sages. Tho' the Court of *Crœsus* is said to have been much resorted to by the Sophists of *Greece*, in the happy beginnings of his Reign. And some of these seven seem to have brought most of the Sciences out of *Ægypt* and *Phœnicia* into *Greece*, particularly those of *Astronomy*, *Astrology*, *Geometry*, and *Arithmetick*. These were soon followed by *Pythagoras*, who seems to have introduced Natural and Moral Philosophy, and by several of his Followers, both in *Greece* and *Italy*. But of all these there remains nothing in Writing now among us, so that

Hyppocrates, Plato, and *Xenophon* are the first *Philosophers* whose works have escaped the injuries of time. But that we may not conclude the first Writers we have of the *Grecians* were the first Learned or Wise among them, We shall find upon inquiry that the more ancient Sages of *Greece* appear, by the Characters remaining of them, to have been much the greater Men. They were generally Princes or Law-givers of their Countries, or at least offered and invited to be so, either of their own or of others, that desired them to frame or reform their several Institutions of Civil Government. They were commonly excellent Poets and great Physicians; they were so learned in Natural Philosophy that they fore-told not only Eclypses in the Heavens, but Earthquakes at Land and Storms at Sea, great Drowths and great Plagues, much Plenty or much Scarcity of certain sorts of Fruits or Grain, not to mention the Magical Powers attributed to several of them to allay Storms, to raise Gales, to appease Commotions of People, to make Plagues cease,—which qualities, whether upon any ground of Truth or no, yet if well believed must have raised them to that strange height they were at, of common esteem and honour, in their own and succeeding Ages.

By all this may be determined whether our Moderns or our Ancients may have had the greater and the better Guides, and which of them have taken the greater pains, and with the more application in the pursuit of Knowledge. And I think it is enough to shew that the advantage we have from those we call the Ancients may not be greater than what they had from those that were so to them.

But after all, I do not know whether the high flights of Wit and Knowledge, like those of Power and of Empire in the World, may not have been made by the pure Native Force of Spirit or Genius in some single men, rather than by any derived strength among them, however encreased

by Succession, and whether they may not have been the Atchievements of Nature, rather than the improvements of Art. Thus the Conquests of *Ninus* and *Semiramis*, of *Alexander* and *Tamerlane*, which I take to have been the greatest Recorded in Story, were at their heighth in those Persons that began them, and so far from being encreased by their Successors that they were not preserved in their extent and vigour by any of them, grew weaker in every hand they passed through, or were divided into many that set up for great Princes out of several small ruins of the First Empires, till they withered away in time, or were lost by the change of Names and Forms of Families or of Governments.

Just the same Fate seems to have attended the highest flights of Learning and of Knowledge that are upon our Registers. *Thales, Pythagoras, Democritus, Hippocrates, Plato, Aristotle, Epicurus* were the first mighty Conquerors of Ignorance in our World, and made greater progresses in the several Empires of Science than any of their Successors have been since able to reach. These have hardly ever pretended more than to learn what the others taught, to remember what they invented; and not able to compass that it self, they have set up for Authors upon some parcels of those great Stocks, or else have contented themselves only to comment upon those Texts, and make the best Copies they could after those Originals.

I have long thought that the different abilities of Men, which we call Wisdom or Prudence, for the conduct of Publick Affairs or Private Life, grow directly out of that little grain of Intellect or Good Sense which they bring with them into the World, and that the defect of it in Men comes from some want in their Conception or Birth.

——*Dixitque semel Nascentibus Author,*
Quicquid scire licet.——

And though this may be improved or impaired in some degree by accidents of Education, of Study, and of Conversation or Business, yet it cannot go beyond the reach of its Native Force, no more than Life can beyond the period to which it was destined by the strength or weakness of the seminal Vertue.

If these speculations should be true, then I know not what advantages we can pretend to modern Knowledge, by any we receive from the Ancients. Nay, 'tis possible men may lose rather than gain by them, may lessen the Force and Growth of their own Genius by constraining and forming it upon that of others, may have less Knowledge of their own for contenting themselves with that of those before them. So a Man that only Translates shall never be a Poet, nor a Painter that only Copies, nor a Swimmer that Swims always with Bladders. So People that trust wholly to others Charity, and without Industry of their own, will be always poor. Besides, who can tell whether Learning may not even weaken Invention in a man that has great Advantages from Nature and Birth, whether the weight and number of so many other mens thoughts and notions may not suppress his own, or hinder the motion and agitation of them from which all Invention arises; As heaping on Wood, or too many Sticks, or too close together, suppresses and sometimes quite extinguishes a little spark that would otherwise have grown up to a noble Flame. The strength of mind as well as of body grows more from the warmth of Exercise than of Cloaths; nay, too much of this Foreign heat rather makes Men faint, and their Constitutions tender or weaker than they would be without them. Let it come about how it will, if we are Dwarfs, we are still so, though we stand upon a Gyant's shoulders; and even so placed, yet we see less than he, if we are naturally shorter sighted, or if we do not look as much about us, or if we are dazled

with the height, which often happens from weakness either of Heart or Brain.

In the growth and stature of Souls as well as Bodies, the common productions are of indifferent sizes, that occasion no gazing nor no wonder. But ⟨tho'⟩ there are or have been sometimes Dwarfs and sometimes Gyants in the World, yet it does not follow that there must be such in every Age nor in every Country. This we can no more conclude than that there never have been any, because there are none now, at least in the compass of our present Knowledge or Inquiry. As I believe there may have been Gyants at some time and some place or other in the World, of such a stature as may not have been equalled perhaps again in several Thousands of Years or in any other Parts, so there may be Gyants in Wit and Knowledge, of so over-grown a size as not to be equalled again in many successions of Ages or any compass of Place or Country. Such, I am sure, *Lucretius* esteems and describes *Epicurus* to have been, and to have risen like a Prodigy of Invention and Knowledge, such as had not been before nor was like to be again; and I know not why others of the Ancients may not be allowed to have been as great in their kinds, and to have built as high, though upon different Schemes or Foundations. Because there is a Stag's head at *Amboyse* of a most prodigious size, and a large Table at *Memorancy* cut out of the thickness of a Vine-stock, is it necessary that there must be every Age such a Stag in every great Forest or such a Vine in every large Vineyard; or that the Productions of Nature in any kind must be still alike, or something near it, because Nature is still the same? May there not many circumstances concur to one production that do not to any other in one or many Ages? In the growth of a Tree, there is the native strength of the seed, both from the kind and from the perfection of its ripening, and

from the health and vigour of the Plant that bore it. There is the degree of strength and excellence in that Vein of Earth where it first took root; There is a propriety of Soyl, suited to the kind of Tree that grows in it; there is a great favour or dis-favour to its growth from accidents of Water and of Shelter, from the kindness or unkindness of Seasons, till it be past the need or the danger of them. All these, and perhaps many others, joyned with the propitiousness of Clymat to that sort of Tree, and the length of Age it shall stand and grow, may produce an Oak, a Fig, or a Plane-tree, that shall deserve to be renowned in Story, and shall not perhaps be parallel'd in other Countrys or Times.

May not the same have happened in the production, growth, and size of Wit and Genius in the World, or in some Parts or Ages of it, and from many more circumstances that contributed towards it than what may concur to the stupendious growth of a Tree or Animal? May there not have been, in *Greece* or *Italy* of old, such prodigies of Invention and Learning in *Philosophy, Mathematicks, Physick, Oratory, Poetry,* that none has ever since approached them, as well as there were in *Painting, Statuary, Architecture,* and yet their unparallel'd and inimitable excellencies in these are undisputed?

Science and Arts have run their circles, and had their periods in the several Parts of the World. They are generally agreed to have held their course from *East* to *West,* to have begun in *Chaldæa* and *Ægypt,* to have been Transplanted from thence to *Greece,* from *Greece* to *Rome,* to have sunk there, and after many Ages to have revived from those Ashes, and to have sprung up again, both in *Italy* and other more *Western* Provinces of *Europe.* When *Chaldæa* and *Ægypt* were Learned and Civil, *Greece* and *Rome* were as rude and barbarous as all *Ægypt* and *Syria* now are and have been long. When *Greece* and

Rome were at their heights in Arts and Science, *Gaul, Germany, Britain* were as ignorant and barbarous as any Parts of *Greece* or *Turkey* can be now.

These and greater changes are made in the several Countries of the World and courses of time by the Revolutions of Empire, the Devastations of Armies, the Cruelties of Conquering, and the Calamities of enslaved Nations, by the violent inundations of Water in some Countries, and the Cruel Ravages of Plagues in others. These sorts of accidents sometimes lay them so waste that, when they rise again, 'tis from such low beginnings that they look like New-Created Regions, or growing out of the Original State of Mankind, and without any Records or Remembrances beyond certain short periods of time. Thus that vast Continent of *Norway* is said to have been so wholly desolated by a Plague about Eight or Nine Hundred Years ago, that it was for some Ages following a very Desart, and since all over-grown with Wood; And *Ireland* was so spoiled and wasted by the Conquests of the *Scutes* and *Danes*, that there hardly remains any Story or Tradition what that Island was, how Planted or Governed, above Five Hundred Years ago. What changes have been made by Violent Storms and Inundations of the Sea in the Maritine Provinces of the *Low-Countrys* is hard to know, or to believe what is told, nor how ignorant they have left us of all that passed there before a certain and short period of time.

The Accounts of many other Countries would, perhaps, as hardly and as late have waded out of the Depths of Time and Gulphs of Ignorance, had it not been for the Assistance of those two Languages to which we owe all we have of Learning or Ancient Records in the World. For whether we have any thing of the Old *Chaldæan, Hebrew, Arabian* that is truly Genuine, or more Ancient than the *Augustan* Age, I am much in doubt; yet 'tis

probable the vast *Alexandrian* Library must have chiefly consisted of Books composed in those Languages, with the *Ægyptian*, *Syrian*, and *Æthiopick*, or at least Translated out of them by the Care of the *Ægyptian* Kings or Priests, as the *Old Testament* was, wherein the *Septuagints* employed left their Name to that Famous Translation.

'Tis very true and just, All that is said of the mighty Progress that Learning and Knowledge have made in these *Western* Parts of *Europe* within these hundred and fifty Years; but that does not conclude it must be at greater Heighth than it had been in other Countries, where it was growing much longer Periods of Time; it argues more how low it was then amongst us rather than how high it is now.

Upon the Fall of the *Roman* Empire, almost all Learning was buried in its Ruines: The *Northern* Nations that Conquered, or rather overwhelmed it by their Numbers, were too barbarous to preserve the Remains of Learning or Civility more carefully than they did those of Statuary or Architecture, which fell before their Brutish Rage. The *Saracens*, indeed, from their Conquests of *Ægypt*, *Syria*, and *Greece* carried home great Spoils of Learning as well as other Riches, and gave the Original of all that Knowledge which flourished for some time among the *Arabians*, and has since been copied out of many Authors among them, as theirs had been out of those of the Countries they had subdued; nor, indeed, do Learning, Civility, Morality seem any where to have made a greater Growth in so short a Time than in that Empire, nor to have flourished more than in the Reign of their Great *Almanzor*, under whose Victorious Ensigns *Spain* was Conquered by the *Moors*; but the *Goths*, and all the rest of those *Scythian* Swarms that from beyond the *Danube* and the *Elb*, under so many several Names, over-run all *Europe*, took very hardly and very late

any Tincture of the Learning and Humanity that had flourished in the several Regions of it, under the Protection and by the Example and Instructions of the *Romans* that had so long possessed them. Those *Northern* Nations were indeed easier induced to embrace the Religion of those they had subdued, and by their Devotion gave great Authority and Revenues and thereby Ease to the Clergy, both Secular and Regular, through all their Conquests. Great Numbers of the better sort among the Oppressed Natives, finding this vein among them, and no other way to be safe and quiet under such rough Masters, betook themselves to the Profession and Assemblies of Religious Orders and Fraternities, and among those onely were preserved all the poor Remainders of Learning in these several Countries.

But these good men either contented themselves with their Devotion or with the Ease of quiet Lives, or else employed their Thoughts and Studies to raise and maintain the Esteem and Authority of that Sacred Order to which they owed the Safety and Repose, the Wealth and Honour they enjoyed. And in this they so well succeeded, that the Conquerors were governed by those they had subdued, the Greatest Princes by the Meanest Priests, and the Victorious *Franks* and *Lombard* Kings fell at the feet of the *Roman* Prelates.

Whilst the Clergy were busied in these Thoughts or Studies, the better sort among the Laity were wholly turned to Arms and to Honour, the meaner sort to Labour or to Spoil; Princes taken up with Wars among themselves, or in those of the Holy Land, or between the Popes and Emperors, upon Disputes of the Ecclesiastical and Secular Powers; Learning so little in use among them that few could write or read, besides those of the Long Robes. During this Course of Time, which lasted many Ages in the *Western* Parts of *Europe*, The *Greek*

Tongue was wholly lost, and the Purity of the *Roman* to that degree that what remained of it was onely a certain Jargon rather than Latin, that passed among the *Monks* and *Fryers* who were at all Learned, and among the Students of the several Universities, which served to carry them to *Rome* in pursuit of Preferments or Causes depending there, and little else.

When the *Turks* took *Constantinople* about two hundred Years ago, and soon after possessed themselves of all *Greece*, the poor Natives, fearing the Tyranny of those cruel Masters, made their Escapes in great Numbers to the Neighbouring parts of Christendom, some by the *Austrian* Territories into *Germany*, others by the *Venetian* into *Italy* and *France*; several that were Learned among these *Grecians*, and brought many Ancient Books with them in that Language, began to teach it in these Countries, first to gain Subsistence, and afterwards Favour in some Princes or Great mens Courts, who began to take a Pleasure or Pride in countenancing Learned men. Thus began the Restoration of Learning in these Parts with that of the *Greek* Tongue; and soon after, *Reuchlyn* and *Erasmus* began that of the purer and ancient Latin. After them *Buchanan* carried it, I think, to the greatest Heighth of any of the Moderns before or since. The *Monkish* Latin, upon this Return, was laughed out of doors, and remains only in the Inns of *Germany* or *Poland*; and with the Restitution of these two Noble Languages and the Books remaining of them, which many Princes and Prelates were curious to recover and collect, Learning of all sorts began to thrive in these *Western* Regions, and since that time, and in the first succeeding Century, made perhaps a greater growth than in any other that we know of in such a compass of Time, considering into what Depths of Ignorance it was sunk before.

But why from thence should be concluded, That it has out-grown all that was Ancient, I see no Reason. If a Strong and Vigorous man at Thirty Years old should fall into a Consumption, and so draw on till Fifty in the extreamest Weakness and Infirmity, after that should begin to Recover Health till Sixty, so as to be again as Strong as men usually are at that Age, It might perhaps truly be said in that case that he had grown more in Strength that last Ten Years than any others of his Life, but not that he was grown to more Strength and Vigour than he had at Thirty Years old.

But what are the Sciences wherein we pretend to excel? I know of no New Philosophers that have made Entries upon that Noble Stage for Fifteen Hundred Years past, unless *Des Cartes* and *Hobbs* should pretend to it, of whom I shall make no Critick here, but only say, That by what appears of Learned Mens Opinions in this Age, they have by no means eclypsed the Lustre of *Plato*, *Aristotle*, *Epicurus*, or others of the Ancients. For Grammar or Rhetorick, no man ever disputed it with them, nor for Poetry, that ever I heard of, besides the New *French* Author I have mentioned, and against whose Opinion there could, I think, never have been given stronger Evidence than by his own Poems, Printed together with that Treatise.

There is nothing new in *Astronomy* to vye with the Ancients, unless it be the *Copernican* System; nor in *Physick*, unless *Hervy*'s Circulation of the blood. But whether either of these be modern discoveries, or derived from old Fountains, is disputed: Nay, it is so, too, whether they are true or no; for though reason may seem to favour them more than the contrary Opinion, yet sense can very hardly allow them; and to satisfie Mankind, both these must concur. But if they are true, yet these two great discoveries have made no change

in the conclusions of *Astronomy*, nor in the practise of Physick, and so have been of little use to the World, though perhaps of much honour to the Authors.

What are become of the Charms of Musick, by which Men and Beasts, Fishes, Fowls, and Serpents were so frequently Enchanted, and their very Natures changed; By which the Passions of men were raised to the greatest heigth and violence, and then as suddenly appeased, so as they might be justly said to be turned into Lyons or Lambs, into Wolves or into Harts, by the Power and Charms of this admirable Art? 'Tis agreed by the Learned that the Science of Musick, so admired of the Ancients, is wholly lost in the World, and that what we have now is made up out of certain Notes that fell into the fancy or observation of a poor *Fryar* in chanting his Mattins. So as those Two Divine Excellencies of Musick and Poetry are grown in a manner to be little more, but the one Fidling, and the other Rhyming; and are indeed very worthy the ignorance of the Fryer and the barbarousness of the *Goths* that introduced them among us.

What have we remaining of *Magick*, by which the *Indians*, the *Chaldæans*, the *Ægyptians* were so renowned, and by which effects so wonderful and to common men so astonishing were produced, as made them have recourse to Spirits or Supernatural Powers for some account of their strange Operations? By *Magick* I mean some excelling knowledge of Nature and the various Powers and Qualities in its several productions, and the application of certain Agents to certain Patients, which by force of some peculiar qualities produce effects very different from what fall under vulgar Observation or Comprehension. These are by ignorant People called *Magick* and *Conjuring*, and such like Terms, and an Account of them much about as wise is given by the

common Learned, from *Sympathies*, *Antipathies*, *Idiosyncrasys*, *Talismans*, and some scraps or Terms left us by the *Ægyptians* or *Grecians* of the Ancient Magick; but the Science seems, with several others, to be wholly lost.

What Traces have we left of that admirable Science or Skill in Architecture, by which such stupendious Fabricks have been raised of old and so many of the Wonders of the World been produced, and which are so little approached by our Modern Atchievements of this sort, that they hardly fall within our Imagination? Not to mention the Walls and Palace of *Babylon*, the Pyramids of *Egypt*, the Tomb of *Mausolus*, or *Collosse* of *Rhodes*, the Temples and Palaces of *Greece* and *Rome*: What can be more admirable in this kind than the *Roman* Theatres, their Aqueducts, and their Bridges, among which that of *Trajan* over the *Danube* seems to have been the last Flight of the Ancient Architecture? The stupendious Effects of this Science sufficiently evince at what Heighths the Mathematicks were among the Ancients; but if this be not enough, who-ever would be satisfied need go no further than the Siege of *Syracuse*, and that mighty Defence made against the *Roman* Power, more by the wonderful Science and Arts of *Archimedes*, and almost Magical Force of his Engines, than by all the Strength of the City, or Number and Bravery of the Inhabitants.

The greatest Invention that I know of in later Ages has been that of the Load-Stone, and consequently the greatest Improvement has been made in the Art of Navigation; yet there must be allowed to have been something stupendious in the Numbers and in the Built of their Ships and Gallies of old; and the Skill of Pylots, from the Observation of the Stars in the more serene Clymates, may be judged by the Navigations, so celebrated in Story, of the *Tyrians* and *Carthagenians*, not to mention other

Nations. However, 'tis to this we owe the Discovery and Commerce of so many vast Countries which were very little if at all known to the Ancients, and the experimental Proof of this Terrestrial Globe, which was before only Speculation, but has since been surrounded by the Fortune and Boldness of several Navigators. From this great though fortuitous Invention, and the consequence thereof, it must be allowed that Geography is mightily advanced in these latter Ages. The Vast Continents of *China*, the *East* and *West Indies*, the long Extent and Coasts of *Africa*, with the numberless Islands belonging to them, have been hereby introduced into our Acquaintance and our Maps, and great Increases of Wealth and Luxury, but none of Knowledge, brought among us, further than the Extent and scituation of Country, the customs and manners of so many original Nations, which we call Barbarous, and I am sure have treated them as if we hardly esteem them to be a part of Mankind. I do not doubt but many Great and more Noble Uses would have been made of such Conquests or Discoveries, if they had fallen to the share of the *Greeks* and *Romans* in those Ages when Knowledge and Fame were in as great Request as endless Gains and Wealth are among us now; and how much greater Discoveries might have been made by such Spirits as theirs is hard to guess. I am sure ours, though great, yet look very imperfect, as to what the Face of this Terrestrial Globe would probably appear, if they had been pursued as far as we might justly have expected from the Progresses of Navigation since the Use of the Compass, which seems to have been long at a stand. How little has been performed of what has been so often and so confidently promised of a *North-West* Passage to the *East* of *Tartary* and *North* of *China*! How little do we know of the Lands on that side of the

Magellan Straits that lye towards the *South Pole*, which may be vast Islands or Continents for ought any can yet aver, though that Passage was so long since found out! Whether *Japan* be Island or Continent, with some Parts of *Tartary* on the *North* side, is not certainly agreed. The Lands of *Yedso* upon the *North-East* Continent have been no more than Coasted, and whether they may not joyn to the *Northern* Continent of *America* is by some doubted.

But the Defect or Negligence seems yet to have been greater towards the *South*, where we know little beyond Thirty Five Degrees, and that only by the Necessity of doubling the Cape of *Goodhope* in our *East-India* Voyages; yet a Continent has been long since found out within Fifteen Degrees to *South*, and about the Length of *Java*, which is marked by the Name of *New Holland* in the Maps, and to what Extent none knows, either to the *South*, the *East*, or the *West*; yet the Learned have been of Opinion, That there must be a Ballance of Earth on that side of the Line, in some Proportion to what there is on the other, and that it cannot be all *Sea* from Thirty Degrees to the *South-Pole*, since we have found Land to above Sixty Degrees towards the *North*. But our Navigators that way have been confined to the Roads of Trade, and our Discoveries bounded by what we can manage to a certain Degree of Gain. And I have heard it said among the *Dutch* that their *East-India*-Company have long since forbidden, and under the greatest Penalties, any further Attempts of discovering that Continent, having already more Trade in those Parts than they can turn to Account, and fearing some more Populous Nation of *Europe* might make great Establishments of Trade in some of those unknown Regions which might ruine or impair what they have already in the *Indies*.

Thus we are lame still in Geography it self, which we might have expected to run up to so much greater Perfection by the Use of the Compass; and it seems to have been little advanced these last Hundred Years. So far have we been from improving upon those Advantages we have received from the Knowledge of the Ancients, that since the late Restoration of Learning and Arts among us, our first Flights seem to have been the highest, and a sudden Damp to have fallen upon our Wings, which has hindered us from rising above certain Heights. The Arts of Painting and Statuary began to revive with Learning in *Europe*, and made a great but short Flight, so as for these last Hundred Years we have not had One Master in either of them who deserved a Rank with those that flourished in that short Period after they began among us.

It were too great a Mortification to think, That the same Fate has happened to us, even in our Modern Learning, as if the Growth of that, as well as of Natural Bodies, had some short Periods beyond which it could not reach, and after which it must begin to decay. It falls in one Country or one Age, and rises again in others, but never beyond a certain Pitch. One Man or one Country at a certain Time runs a great Length in some certain Kinds of Knowledge, but lose as much Ground in others that were perhaps as useful and as valuable. There is a certain Degree of Capacity in the greatest Vessel, and when 'tis full, if you pour in still, it must run out some way or other; and the more it runs out on one side, the less runs out at the other. So the greatest Memory, after a certain Degree, as it learns or retains more of some Things or Words, loses and forgets as much of others. The largest and deepest Reach of Thought, the more it pursues some certain Subjects, the more it neglects others.

Besides, few men or none excel in all Faculties of Mind. A great Memory may fail of Invention, both may want Judgment to Digest or Apply what they Remember or Invent. Great Courage may want Caution, great Prudence may want Vigour, yet all are necessary to make a great Commander. But how can a man hope to excel in all qualities, when some are produced by the heat, others by the coldness, of Brain and Temper? The abilities of man must fall short on one side or other, like too scanty a Blanket when you are a Bed: if you pull it upon your Shoulders, you leave your Feet bare; if you thrust it down upon your Feet, your Shoulders are uncovered.

But what would we have, unless it be other Natures and Beings than God Almighty has given us? The heigth of our Statures may be six or seven Foot, and we would have it sixteen; the length of our Age may reach to a hundred Years, and we would have it a thousand. We are born to grovel upon the Earth, and we would fain soar up to the Skies. We cannot comprehend the growth of a Kernel or Seed, the Frame of an *Ant* or *Bee*; we are amazed at the Wisdom of the one and Industry of the other, and yet we will know the Substance, the Figure, the Courses, the Influences of all those Glorious Cœlestial Bodies, and the end for which they were made; we pretend to give a clear Account how Thunder and Lightning (that great Artillery of God Almighty) is produced, and we cannot comprehend how the Voice of a man is Framed, that poor little noise we make every time we speak. The motion of the Sun is plain and evident to some Astronomers, and of the Earth to others, yet we none of us know which of them moves, and meet with many seeming impossibilities in both, and beyond the fathom of human reason or comprehension. Nay, we do not so much as know what Motion is, nor how a

stone moves from our hand when we throw it cross the Street. Of all these that most Ancient and Divine Writer gives the best Account in that short Satyr, *Vain man would fain be wise, when he is born like a wild Asses Colt.*

But God be thanked, his Pride is greater than his ignorance; and what he wants in Knowledge he supplies by Sufficiency. When he has looked about him as far as he can, he concludes there is no more to be seen; when he is at the end of his Line, he is at the bottom of the Ocean; when he has shot his best, he is sure none ever did nor ever can shoot better or beyond it. His own Reason is the certain measure of truth, his own Knowledge, of what is possible in Nature, though his mind and his thoughts change every seven Years as well as his strength and his features; nay, though his Opinions change every Week or every Day, yet he is sure, or at least confident, that his present thoughts and conclusions are just and true, and cannot be deceived; And among all the miseries to which mankind is born and subjected in the whole course of his life, he has this one Felicity to Comfort and Support him, That in all ages, in all things, every man is always in the right. A Boy of fifteen is wiser than his Father at forty, the meanest Subject than his Prince or Governours; and the modern Scholars, because they have for a Hundred Years past learned their Lesson pretty well, are much more knowing than the Ancients, their Masters.

But let it be so, and proved by good reasons, Is it so by experience too? Have the Studies, the Writings, the Productions of *Gresham* Colledge, or the late Academies of *Paris*, outshined or eclypsed the Lycæum of *Plato*, the Academy of *Aristotle*, the Stoa of *Zeno*, the Garden of *Epicurus?* Has *Hervy* outdone *Hippocrates*, or *Wilkins*, *Archimedes?* Are *D'avila*'s and *Strada*'s Histories beyond those of *Herodotus* and *Livy*? Are *Sleyden*'s Commen-

taries beyond those of *Cæsar*? The Flights of *Boileau* above those of *Virgil?* If all this must be allowed, I will then yield *Gondibert* to have excelled *Homer*, as it pretended, and the modern *French* Poetry, all that of the Ancients. And yet, I think, it may be as reasonably said, That the Plays in *Moor-Fields* are beyond the *Olympick* Games; A *Welsh* or *Irish* Harp excels those of *Orpheus* and *Arion;* The Pyramid in *London*, those of *Memphis;* and the *French* Conquests in *Flanders* are greater than those of *Alexander* and *Cæsar*, as their Opera's and Panegyricks would make us believe.

But the Consideration of Poetry ought to be a Subject by it self. For the Books we have in Prose, Do any of the modern we Converse with appear of such a Spirit and Force as if they would live longer than the Ancient have done? If our Wit and Eloquence, our knowledge or Inventions would deserve it, yet our Languages would not; there is no hope of their lasting long, nor of any thing in them; they change every Hundred Years so as to be hardly known for the same, or any thing of the former Styles to be endured by the later; so as they can no more last like the Ancients, than excellent Carvings in Wood like those in Marble or Brass.

The three modern Tongues most esteemed are *Italian*, *Spanish*, and *French*, all imperfect Dialects of the Noble *Roman*: first mingled and corrupted with the harsh Words and Terminations of those many different and barbarous Nations by whose Invasions and Excursions the *Roman* Empire was long infested, They were afterwards made up into these several Languages, by long and popular use, out of those ruins and corruptions of *Latin* and the prevailing Languages of those Nations to which these several Provinces came in time to be most and longest subjected, as the *Goths* and *Moors* in *Spain*, the *Goths* and *Lombards* in *Italy*, the *Franks* in *Gaul*, besides

a mingle of those Tongues which were Original to *Gaul* and to *Spain* before the *Roman* Conquests and Establishments there. Of these there may be some Remainders in *Biscay* or the *Asturias;* but I doubt whether there be any of the old *Gallick* in *France*, the Subjection there having been more Universal, both to the *Romans* and *Franks*. But I do not find the Mountainous Parts on the *North* of *Spain* were ever wholly subdued or formerly Governed either by the *Romans*, *Goths*, or *Saracens*, no more than *Wales* by *Romans*, *Saxons*, or *Normans*, after their Conquests in our Islands: which has preserved the ancient *Biscayn* and *British* more entire than any Native Tongue of other Provinces where the *Roman* and *Gothick* or *Northern* Conquests reached and were for any time Established.

'Tis easy to imagine how imperfect Copies these modern Languages, thus composed, must needs be of so excellent an Original, being patcht up out of the Conceptions as well as Sounds of such barbarous or enslaved People. Whereas the *Latin* was framed or cultivated by the thoughts and uses of the Noblest Nation that appears upon any Record of Story, and enriched only by the Spoyls of *Greece*, which alone could pretend to contest it with them. 'Tis obvious enough what rapport there is, and must ever be, between the thoughts and words, the Conceptions and Languages of every Country, and how great a difference this must make in the Comparison and Excellence of Books, and how easy and just a preference it must decree to those of the *Greek* and *Latin* before any of the modern Languages.

It may, perhaps, be further affirmed in Favour of the Ancients, that the oldest Books we have are still in their kind the best. The two most ancient that I know of in Prose, among those we call prophane Authors, are *Æsop*'s Fables and *Phalaris*'s Epistles, both living near the same time, which was that of *Cyrus* and *Pythagoras*. As the

first has been agreed by all Ages since for the greatest Master in his kind, and all others of that sort have been but imitations of his Original, so I think the Epistles of *Phalaris* to have more Race, more Spirit, more Force of Wit and Genius, than any others I have ever seen, either ancient or modern. I know several Learned men (or that usually pass for such, under the Name of Criticks) have not esteemed them Genuine, and *Politian* with some others have attributed them to *Lucian*. But I think he must have little skill in Painting, that cannot find out this to be an Original; such diversity of Passions upon such variety of Actions and Passages of Life and Government, such Freedom of Thought, such Boldness of Expression, such Bounty to his Friends, such Scorn of his Enemies, such Honour of Learned men, such esteem of Good, such Knowledge of Life, such Contempt of Death, with such Fierceness of Nature and Cruelty of Revenge, could never be represented but by him that possessed them; and I esteem *Lucian* to have been no more Capable of Writing than of Acting what *Phalaris* did. In all one Writ you find the Scholar or the Sophist; and in all the other, the Tyrant and the Commander.

The next to these in Time are *Herodotus*, *Thucidides*, *Hippocrates*, *Plato*, *Xenophon*, and *Aristotle*, of whom I shall say no more than what I think is allowed by all, that they are in their several kinds inimitable. So are *Cæsar*, *Salust*, and *Cicero* in theirs, who are the Ancientest of the Latin (I speak still of Prose), unless it be some little of old *Cato* upon Rustick Affairs.

The Height and Purity of the *Roman* Style, as it began towards the Time of *Lucretius*, which was about that of the *Jugurthin* War, so it ended about that of *Tyberius*; and the last strain of it seems to have been *Velleius Paterculus*. The Purity of the *Greek* lasted a great deal longer, and must be allowed till *Trajan*'s Time, when *Plutarch* wrote,

whose Greek is much more esteemable than the Latin of *Tacitus*, his Contemporary. After this last, I know none that deserves the Name of *Latin*, in comparison of what went before them, especially in the *Augustan* Age; If any, 'tis the little Treatise of *Minutius Fœlix*. All Latin Books that we have till the end of *Trajan*, and all Greek till the end of *Marcus Antoninus*, have a true and very esteemable Value. All written since that time seem to me to have little more than what comes from the Relation of Events we are glad to know, or the Controversy of Opinions in Religion or Laws, wherein the busie World has been so much imployed.

The great Wits among the moderns have been, in my Opinion, and in their several kinds, of the *Italians*, *Boccace*, *Machiavel*, and *Padre Paolo*; among the *Spaniards*, *Cervantes*, that writ *Don Quixot*, and *Guevara*; among the *French*, *Rablais* and *Montagne*; among the *English*, Sir *Philip Sidney*, *Bacon*, and *Selden*. I mention nothing of what is written upon the Subject of Divinity, wherein the *Spanish* and *English* Pens have been most Conversant and most Excelled. The Modern *French* are *Voiture*, *Rochfaucalt's* Memoirs, *Bussy's Amours de Gaul*, with several other little Relations or Memoirs that have run this Age, which are very pleasant and entertaining, and seem to have Refined the *French* Language to a degree that cannot be well exceeded. I doubt it may have happened there, as it does in all Works, that the more they are filed and polished, the less they have of weight and of strength; and as that Language has much more fineness and smoothness at this time, so I take it to have had much more force, spirit, and compass in *Montagne*'s Age.

Since those accidents which contributed to the Restoration of Learning, almost extinguished in the *Western* Parts of *Europe*, have been observed, it will be just to mention some that may have hindred the advancement of

it, in proportion to what might have been expected from the mighty growth and progress made in the first Age after its recovery. One great reason may have been that very soon after the entry of Learning upon the Scene of Christendom, another was made by many of the New-Learned men into the inquiries and contests about matters of Religion, the manners and maxims and institutions introduced by the Clergy for seven or eight Centuries past, The Authority of Scripture and Tradition, Of Popes and of Councels, Of the ancient Fathers and of the later School-men and Casuists, Of Ecclesiastical and Civil Power. The humour of ravelling into all these mystical or entangled Matters, mingling with the Interests and Passions of Princes and of Parties, and thereby heightned or inflamed, produced Infinite Disputes, raised violent Heats throughout all Parts of Christendom, and soon ended in many Defections or Reformations from the *Roman* Church, and in several new Institutions, both Ecclesiastical and Civil, in diverse Countries, which have been since Rooted and Established in almost all the *North-West* Parts. The endless Disputes and litigious Quarrels upon all these Subjects, favoured and encouraged by the Interests of the several Princes engaged in them, either took up wholly or generally imployed the Thoughts, the Studies, the Applications, the endeavours of all or most of the finest Wits, the deepest Scholars, and the most Learned Writers that the Age produced. Many excellent Spirits, and the most penetrating Genys, that might have made admirable Progresses and Advances in many other Sciences, were sunk and overwhelmed in the abyss of Disputes about matters of Religion, without ever turning their Looks or Thoughts any other way. To these Disputes of the Pen succeeded those of the Sword; and the Ambition of great Princes and Ministers, mingled with the Zeal or covered with the pretences of Religion, has for a Hundred

Years past infested Christendom with almost a perpetual Course or Succession either of Civil or of Foreign Wars: the noise and disorders thereof have been ever the most capital Enemies of the *Muses*, who are seated by the ancient Fables upon the top of *Parnassus*, that is, in a place of safety and of quiet from the reach of all noises and disturbances of the Regions below.

Another circumstance that may have hindred the advancement of Learning has been a want or decay of Favour in great Kings and Princes to encourage or applaud it. Upon the first return or recovery of this fair Stranger among us, all were fond of seeing her, apt to applaud her: she was lodged in Palaces instead of Cells, and the greatest Kings and Princes of the Age took either a pleasure in courting her or a vanity in admiring her and in favouring all her Train. The Courts of *Italy* and *Germany*, of *England*, of *France*, of *Popes* and of *Emperors* thought themselves Honoured and Adorned by the Number and Qualities of Learned men, and by all the improvements of Sciences and Arts wherein they excelled. They were invited from all Parts, for the Use and Entertainment of Kings, for the Education and Instruction of Young Princes, for Advice and Assistance to the greatest Ministers; and in short, the Favour of Learning was the humour and mode of the Age. *Francis* the First, *Charles* the Fifth, and *Henry* the Eighth, those three great Rivals, agreed in this, though in nothing else. Many Nobles pursued this Vein with great Application and Success, among whom *Picus de Mirandula*, a Sovereign Prince in *Italy*, might have proved a Prodigy of Learning, if his Studies and Life had lasted as long as those of the Ancients: For I think all of them that writ much of what we have now remaining lived old, whereas he dyed about Three and Thirty, and left the World in admiration of so much knowledge in so much youth. Since those Reigns

I have not observed in our modern Story any Great Princes much Celebrated for their Favour of Learning, further than to serve their turns, to justifie their Pretensions and Quarrels, or flatter their Successes. The Honour of Princes has of late struck Sale to their Interest, whereas of old their Interests, Greatness, and Conquests were all Dedicated to their Glory and Fame.

How much the Studies and Labours of Learned men must have been damped for want of this influence and kind aspect of Princes may be best conjectured from what happened on the contrary about the *Augustan* Age, when the Learning of *Rome* was at its height, and perhaps owed it in some Degree to the Bounty and Patronage of that Emperor, and *Mecœnas*, his Favourite, as well as to the Felicity of the Empire and Tranquility of the Age.

The humour of Avarice and greediness of Wealth have been ever and in all Countries where Silver and Gold have been in Price and of current use. But if it be true in particular Men, that as Riches encrease, the desires of them do so too, May it not be true of the general Vein and Humour of Ages? May they not have turned more to this pursuit of insatiable gains, since the Discoveries and Plantations of the *West-Indies*, and those vast Treasures that have flowed in to these *Western* Parts of *Europe* almost every Year and with such mighty Tides for so long a course of time? Where few are rich, few care for it; where many are so, many desire it; and most in time begin to think it necessary. Where this Opinion grows generally in a Countrey, the Temples of Honour are soon pulled down, and all mens Sacrifices are made to those of Fortune: The Souldier as well as the Merchant, the Scholar as well as the Plough-man, the Divine and the States-man as well as the Lawyer and Physician.

Now I think that nothing is more evident in the World than that Honour is a much stronger Principle, both of

Action and Invention, than gain can ever be. That all the Great and Noble Productions of Wit and of Courage have been inspired and exalted by that alone. That the Charming Flights and Labours of Poets, the deep Speculations and Studies of Philosophers, the Conquests of Emperors and Atchievements of Heroes, have all flowed from this one Source of Honour and Fame. The last Farewel that *Horace* takes of his Lyrick Poems, *Epicurus* of his Inventions in Philosophy, *Augustus* of his Empire and Government, are all of the same strain; and as their Lives were entertained, so their Age was relieved and their Deaths softned, by the Prospect of lying down upon the Bed of Fame.

Avarice is, on the other side, of all Passions the most sordid, the most clogged and covered with dirt and with dross, so that it cannot raise its Wings beyond the smell of the Earth. 'Tis the Pay of common Soldiers, as Honour is of Commanders; and yet among those themselves none ever went so far upon the hopes of prey or of spoils as those that have been spirited by Honour or Religion. 'Tis no wonder, then, that Learning has been so little advanced since it grew to be mercenary, and the Progress of it has been fettered by the cares of the World, and disturbed by the Desires of being Rich or the fears of being Poor, from all which the ancient *Philosophers*, the *Brachmans* of *India*, the *Chaldæan Magi*, and *Ægyptian* Priests were disintangled and free.

But the last maim giving to Learning has been by the scorn of Pedantry, which the shallow, the superficial, and the sufficient among Scholars first drew upon themselves, and very justly, by pretending to more than they had, or to more esteem than what they had could deserve, by broaching it in all places, at all times, upon all occasions, and by living so much among themselves, or in their Closets and Cells, as to make them unfit for all other business, and

ridiculous in all other Conversations. As an Infection that rises in a Town first falls upon Children or weak Constitutions or those that are subject to other Diseases, but, spreading further by degrees, seizes upon the most healthy, vigorous, and strong, and when the Contagion grows very general, all the Neighbours avoid coming into the Town, or are afraid of those that are well among them as much as of those that are sick: Just so it fared in the Commonwealth of Learning; some poor weak Constitutions were first infected with Pedantry, the Contagion spread in time upon some that were stronger; Foreigners that heard there was a Plague in the Countrey grew afraid to come there, and avoided the commerce of the Sound as well as of the Diseased. This dislike or apprehension turned, like all fear, to hatred, and hatred to scorn. The rest of the Neighbours began first to rail at Pedants, then to ridicule them; the Learned began to fear the same Fate, and that the Pidgeons should be taken for Daws, because they were all in a Flock: And because the poorest and meanest of the Company were proud, the best and the richest began to be ashamed.

An Ingenious *Spaniard* at *Brussels* would needs have it that the History of *Don Quixot* had ruined the *Spanish* Monarchy: For before that time Love and Valour were all Romance among them; every young Cavalier that entred the Scene Dedicated the Services of his Life to his Honour first, and then to his Mistris. They Lived and Dyed in this Romantick Vein; and the old Duke of *Alva*, in his last *Portugal* expedition, had a young Mistress to whom the Glory of that Atchievement was Devoted, by which he hoped to value himself, instead of those qualities he had lost with his youth. After *Don Quixot* appeared, and with that inimitable Wit and Humour turned all this Romantick Honour and Love into Ridicule, the *Spaniards*, he said, began to grow ashamed of both, and to laugh at Fighting

and Loving, or at least otherwise than to pursue their Fortune or satisfy their Lust; and the consequences of this, both upon their Bodies and their Minds, this *Spaniard* would needs have pass for a great Cause of the Ruin of *Spain*, or of its Greatness and Power.

Whatever effect the Ridicule of Knight-Errantry might have had upon that Monarchy, I believe that of Pedantry has had a very ill one upon the Commonwealth of Learning; and I wish the Vein of Ridiculing all that is serious and good, all Honour and Virtue as well as Learning and Piety, may have no worse effects on any other State: 'Tis the Itch of our Age and Clymat, and has over run both the Court and the Stage, enters a House of Lords and Commons as boldly as a *Coffee*-House, Debates of Council as well as private Conversation; and I have known in my Life more than one or two Ministers of State that would rather have said a Witty thing than done a Wise one, and made the Company Laugh rather than the Kingdom Rejoyce. But this is enough to excuse the imperfections of Learning in our Age, and to censure the Sufficiency of some of the Learned; and this small Piece of Justice I have done the Ancients will not, I hope, be taken any more than 'tis meant, for any Injury to the Moderns.

I shall conclude with a Saying of *Alphonsus*, Sirnamed the Wise, King of *Aragon*,

That among so many things as are by Men possessed or pursued in the Course of their Lives, all the rest are Bawbles, Besides Old Wood to Burn, Old Wine to Drink, Old Friends to Converse with, and Old Books to Read.

II. *OF POETRY*

THE Two common Shrines, to which most Men offer up the Application of their Thoughts and their Lives, are Profit and Pleasure; and by their Devotions to either of these, they are vulgarly distinguished into Two Sects, and called either Busie or Idle Men. Whether these Terms differ in meaning or only in sound, I know very well may be disputed, and with appearance enough, since the Covetous Man takes perhaps as much Pleasure in his Gains as the Voluptuous does in his Luxury, and would not pursue his Business unless he were pleased with it, upon the last Account of what he most wishes and desires, nor would care for the encrease of his Fortunes unless he proposed thereby that of his Pleasures too, in one kind or other, so that Pleasure may be said to be his end, whether he will allow to find it in his pursuit or no. Much ado there has been, many Words spent, or (to speak with more respect to the antient Philosophers) many Disputes have been raised upon this Argument, I think to little purpose, and that all has been rather an Exercise of Wit than an Enquiry after Truth, and all Controversies that can never end had better perhaps never begin. The best is to take Words as they are most commonly spoken and meant, like Coyn as it most currantly passes, without raising scruples upon the weight or the allay, unless the cheat or the defect be gross and evident. Few Things in the World, or none, will bear too much refining; a Thred too fine Spun will easily break, and the Point of a Needle too finely Filed. The usual acceptation takes Profit and Pleasure for two different Things, and not only calls the Followers or Votaries of them by several Names of Busie and of Idle Men, but distinguishes the Faculties of the mind that are Conversant about them, calling the Opera-

tions of the first, Wisdom, and of the other, Wit, which is a *Saxon* Word that is used to express what the *Spaniards* and *Italians* call *Ingenio*, and the *French*, *Esprit*, both from the *Latin*; but I think Wit more peculiarly signifies that of *Poetry*, as may occur upon Remarks of the *Runick* Language. To the first of these are Attributed the Inventions or Productions of things generally esteemed the most necessary, useful, or profitable to Human Life, either in private Possessions or publick Institutions; To the other, those Writings or Discourses which are the most Pleasing or Entertaining to all that read or hear them: Yet, according to the Opinion of those that link them together, As the Inventions of Sages and Law-givers themselves do please as well as profit those who approve and follow them, so those of Poets Instruct and Profit as well as Please such as are Conversant in them; and the happy mixture of both these makes the excellency in both those compositions, and has given occasion for esteeming or at least for calling Heroick Virtue and Poetry Divine.

The Names given to Poets, both in *Greek* and *Latin*, express the same Opinion of them in those Nations: The *Greek* signifying Makers or Creators, such as raise admirable Frames and Fabricks out of nothing, which strike with wonder and with pleasure the Eyes and Imaginations of those who behold them; The *Latin* makes the same Word common to Poets and to Prophets. Now, as Creation is the first Attribute and highest Operation of Divine Power, so is Prophecy the greatest Emanation of Divine Spirit in the World. As the Names in those Two Learned Languages, so the Causes of Poetry, are by the Writers of them made to be Divine, and to proceed from a Cœlestial Fire or Divine Inspiration; and by the vulgar Opinions, recited or related to in many Passages of those Authors, the Effects of Poetry were likewise thought Divine

and Supernatural, and Power of Charms and Enchantments were ascribed to it.

Carmina vel Cœlo possunt deducere Lunam,
Carminibus Circe Socios mutavit Ulyssis,
Frigidus in pratis cantando rumpitur Anguis.

But I can easily admire Poetry, and yet without adoring it: I can allow it to arise from the greatest Excellency of natural Temper or the greatest Race of Native Genius, without exceeding the reach of what is Human, or giving it any Approaches of Divinity, which is, I doubt, debased or dishonoured by ascribing to it any thing that is in the compass of our Action or even Comprehension, unless it be raised by an immediate influence from it self. I cannot allow Poetry to be more Divine in its effects than in its causes, nor any Operation produced by it to be more than purely natural, or to deserve any other sort of wonder than those of Musick or of Natural Magick, however any of them have appeared to minds little Versed in the Speculations of Nature, of occult Qualities, and the Force of Numbers or of Sounds. Whoever talks of drawing down the Moon from Heaven by force of Verses or of Charms, either believes not himself, or too easily believes what others told him, or perhaps follows an Opinion begun by the Practise of some Poet upon the facility of some People,—who, knowing the time when an Eclypse would happen, told them he would by his Charms call down the Moon at such an hour, and was by them thought to have performed it.

When I read that Charming Description in *Virgil's* Eighth Ecclogue of all sorts of Charms and Fascinations by Verses, by Images, by Knots, by Numbers, by Fire, by Herbs, imployed upon occasion of a violent Passion from a jealous or disappointed Love, I have recourse to the strong Impressions of Fables and of Poetry, to the easy mistakes of Popular Opinions, to the Force of Imagi-

nation, to the Secret Virtues of several Herbs, and to the Powers of Sounds: And I am sorry the Natural History or Account of Fascination has not imployed the Pen of some Person of such excellent Wit and deep Thought and Learning as *Casaubon*, who Writ that curious and useful Treatise of *Enthusiasm*, and by it discovered the hidden or mistaken Sources of that Delusion, so frequent in all Regions and Religions of the World, and which had so fatally spread over our Country in that Age in which this Treatise was so seasonably published. 'Tis much to be lamented, That he lived not to compleat that Work in the Second Part he promised, or that his Friends neglected the publishing it, if it were left in Papers, though loose and unfinished. I think a clear Account of Enthusiasm and Fascination from their natural Causes would very much deserve from Mankind in general as well as from the Common-wealth of Learning, might perhaps prevent many publick disorders, and save the Lifes of many innocent deluded or deluding People, who suffer so frequently upon Account of Witches and Wizards. I have seen many miserable Examples of this kind in my youth at home; and tho' the Humor or Fashion be a good deal worn out of the World within Thirty or Forty Years past, yet it still remains in several remote parts of *Germany*, *Sweden*, and some other Countries.

But to return to the Charms of Poetry, if the forsaken Lover in that Ecclogue of *Virgil* had expected only from the Force of her Verses or her Charms, what is the Burthen of the Song, to bring *Daphnis* home from the Town where he was gone and engaged in a new Amour; if she had pretended only to revive an old fainting Flame, or to damp a new one that was kindling in his Breast, she might, for ought I know, have compassed such Ends by the Power of such Charms, and without other than very Natural Enchantments. For there is no Question but

true Poetry may have the Force to raise Passions and to allay them, to change and to extinguish them, to temper Joy and Grief, to raise Love and Fear, nay, to turn Fear into Boldness, and Love into Indifference and into Hatred it self; and I easily believe, That the disheartned *Spartans* were new animated, and recovered their lost Courage, by the Songs of *Tyrtæus*, that the Cruelty and Revenge of *Phalaris* were changed by the Odes of *Stesichorus* into the greatest Kindness and Esteem, and that many men were as passionately Enamoured by the Charms of *Sappho*'s Wit and Poetry as by those of Beauty in *Flora* or *Thais*; for 'tis not only Beauty gives Love, but Love gives Beauty to the Object that raises it; and if the possession be strong enough, let it come from what it will, there is always Beauty enough in the Person that gives it. Nor is it any great Wonder that such Force should be found in Poetry, since in it are assembled all the Powers of Eloquence, of Musick, and of Picture, which are all allowed to make so strong Impressions upon Humane Minds. How far Men have been affected with all or any of these needs little Proof or Testimony. The Examples have been known enough in *Greece* and *Italy*, where some have fallen down right in Love with the Ravishing Beauties of a lovely Object drawn by the Skill of an admirable Painter; nay, Painters themselves have fallen in Love with some of their own Productions, and doated on them as on a Mistress or a fond Child, which distinguishes among the *Italians* the several Pieces that are done by the same Hand into several Degrees of those made *Con Studio, Con Diligenza*, or *Con Amore*, whereof the last are ever the most excelling. But there needs no more Instances of this Kind than the Stories related and believed by the best Authors as known and undisputed; Of the two young *Græcians*, one whereof ventured his Life to be lock'd up all Night in the Temple, and satisfie his Passion with the Embraces and Enjoyment

of a Statue of *Venus*, that was there set up and designed for another sort of Adoration; The other pined away and dyed for being hindred his perpetually gazing, admiring, and embracing a Statue at *Athens*.

The Powers of Musick are either felt and known by all Men, and are allowed to work strangely upon the Mind and the Body, the Passions and the Blood, to raise Joy and Grief, to give Pleasure and Pain, to cure Diseases and the Mortal Sting of the *Tarantula*, to give Motions to the Feet as well as the Heart, to Compose disturbed Thoughts, to assist and heighten Devotion it self. We need no Recourse to the Fables of *Orpheus* or *Amphion*, or the Force of their Musick upon Fishes and Beasts; 'tis enough that we find the Charming of Serpents, and the Cure or Allay of an evil Spirit or Possession, attributed to it in Sacred Writ.

For the Force of Eloquence that so often raised and appeased the Violence of Popular Commotions and caused such Convulsions in the *Athenian* State, no Man need more to make him Acknowledge it than to consider *Cæsar*, one of the greatest and wisest of mortal Men, come upon the Tribunal full of Hatred and Revenge, and with a determined Resolution to Condemn *Labienus*, yet upon the Force of *Cicero*'s Eloquence, in an Oration for his Defence, begin to change Countenance, turn pale, shake to that degree that the Papers he held fell out of his hand, as if he had been frighted with Words that never was so with Blows, and at last change all his Anger into Clemency, and acquit the brave Criminal instead of condemning him.

Now if the Strength of these three mighty Powers be united in Poetry, we need not Wonder that such Virtues and such Honours have been attributed to it, that it has been thought to be inspired, or has been called Divine; and yet I think it will not be disputed that the Force of

Wit and of Reasoning, the Height of Conceptions and Expressions, may be found in Poetry as well as in Oratory, the Life and Spirit of Representation or Picture as much as in Painting, and the Force of Sounds as well as in Musick; and how far these three natural Powers together may extend, and to what Effect, even such as may be mistaken for Supernatural or Magical, I leave it to such Men to consider whose Thoughts turn to such Speculations as these, or who by their native Temper and Genius are in some degree disposed to receive the Impressions of them. For my part, I do not wonder that the famous Doctor *Harvey*, when he was reading *Virgil*, should sometimes throw him down upon the Table, and say he had a Devil, nor that the learned *Meric Casaubon* should find such Charming Pleasures and Emotions as he describes, upon the reading some Parts of *Lucretius*; that so many should cry, and with down-right Tears, at some Tragedies of *Shake-spear*, and so many more should feel such Turns or Curdling of their Blood upon the reading or hearing some excellent Pieces of Poetry, nor that *Octavia* fell into a Swound at the recital made by *Virgil* of those Verses in the Sixth of his *Æneides*.

This is enough to assert the Powers of Poetry, and discover the Ground of those Opinions of old which derived it from Divine Inspiration, and gave it so great a share in the supposed Effects of Sorcery or Magick. But as the Old Romances seem to lessen the Honour of true Prowess and Valour in their Knights by giving such a part in all their Chief Adventures to Enchantment, so the true excellency and just esteem of Poetry seems rather debased than exalted by the Stories or Belief of the Charms performed by it, which among the *Northern* Nations grew so strong and so general that about Five or Six Hundred Years ago all the *Runick* Poetry came to be decryed, and those ancient Characters in which they were

Written to be abolished by the Zeal of Bishops and even by Orders and Decrees of State, which has given a great Maim, or rather an irrecoverable Loss, to the Story of those *Northern* Kingdoms, the Seat of our Ancestors in all the *Western* parts of *Europe*.

The more true and natural Source of Poetry may be discovered by observing to what God this Inspiration was ascribed by the Antients, which was *Apollo*, or the Sun, esteemed among them the God of Learning in general, but more particularly of Musick and of Poetry. The Mystery of this Fable means, I suppose, that a certain Noble and Vital Heat of Temper, but especially of the Brain, is the true Spring of these Two Arts or Sciences. This was that Cœlestial Fire which gave such a pleasing Motion and Agitation to the minds of those Men that have been so much admired in the World, that raises such infinite images of things so agreeable and delightful to Mankind. By the influence of this Sun are produced those Golden and Inexhausted Mines of Invention, which has furnished the World with Treasures so highly esteemed and so universally known and used in all the Regions that have yet been discovered. From this arises that Elevation of Genius which can never be produced by any Art or study, by Pains or by Industry, which cannot be taught by Precepts or Examples, and therefore is agreed by all to be the pure and free Gift of Heaven or of Nature, and to be a Fire kindled out of some hidden spark of the very first Conception.

But tho' Invention be the Mother of Poetry, yet this Child is like all others born naked, and must be Nourished with Care, Cloathed with Exactness and Elegance, Educated with Industry, Instructed with Art, Improved by Application, Corrected with Severity, and Accomplished with Labour and with Time, before it Arrives at any great Perfection or Growth. 'Tis certain that no Composition

requires so many several Ingredients, or of more different sorts than this, nor that to excel in any qualities there are necessary so many Gifts of Nature and so many improvements of Learning and of Art. For there must be an universal Genius, of great Compass as well as great Elevation. There must be a spritely Imagination or Fancy, fertile in a thousand Productions, ranging over infinite Ground, piercing into every Corner, and by the Light of that true Poetical Fire discovering a thousand little Bodies or Images in the World, and Similitudes among them, unseen to common Eyes, and which could not be discovered without the Rays of that Sun.

Besides the heat of Invention and liveliness of Wit, there must be the coldness of good Sense and soundness of Judgment, to distinguish between things and conceptions which at first sight or upon short glances seem alike, to choose among infinite productions of Wit and Fancy which are worth preserving and cultivating, and which are better stifled in the Birth, or thrown away when they are born, as not worth bringing up. Without the Forces of Wit all Poetry is flat and languishing; without the succors of Judgment 'tis wild and extravagant. The true wonder of Poesy is, That such contraries must meet to compose it: a Genius both Penetrating and Solid; in Expression both Delicacy and Force; and the Frame or Fabrick of a true Poem must have something both Sublime and Just, Amazing and Agreeable. There must be a great Agitation of Mind to Invent, a great Calm to Judge and correct; there must be upon the same Tree, and at the same Time, both Flower and Fruit. To work up this Metal into exquisite Figure, there must be imploy'd the Fire, the Hammer, the Chizel, and the File. There must be a General Knowledge both of Nature and of Arts; and to go the lowest that can be, there are required *Genius*, Judgment, and Application; for without this last all the

rest will not serve turn, and none ever was a great Poet that applyed himself much to any thing else.

When I speak of Poetry, I mean not an Ode or an Elegy, a Song or a Satyr, nor by a Poet the Composer of any of these, but of a just Poem; And after all I have said, 'tis no wonder there should be so few that appeared in any Parts or any Ages of the World, or that such as have should be so much admired, and have almost Divinity ascribed to them and to their Works.

Whatever has been among those who are mentioned with so much Praise or Admiration by the Antients, but are lost to us, and unknown any further than their Names, I think no Man has been so bold among those that remain to question the Title of *Homer* and *Virgil*, not only to the first Rank, but to the supream Dominion in this State, and from whom, as the great Law-givers as well as Princes, all the Laws and Orders of it are or may be derived. *Homer* was without Dispute the most Universal *Genius* that has been known in the World, and *Virgil* the most accomplish't. To the first must be allowed the most fertile Invention, the richest Vein, the most general Knowledge, and the most lively Expression: To the last, The noblest Idea's, the justest Institution, the wisest Conduct, and the choycest Elocution. To speak in the Painters Terms, we find in the Works of *Homer* the most Spirit, Force, and Life; in those of *Virgil*, the best Design, the truest Proportions, and the greatest Grace: The Colouring in both seems equal, and, indeed, in both is admirable. *Homer* had more Fire and Rapture, *Virgil* more Light and Swiftness; or at least the Poetical Fire was more raging in one, but clearer in the other, which makes the first more amazing and the latter more agreeable. The Oare was richer in one, but in t'other more refined, and better allay'd to make up excellent Work. Upon the whole, I think it must be confessed that *Homer* was of the two, and perhaps of all

others, the vastest, the sublimest, and the most wonderful *Genius*; and that he has been generally so esteemed, there cannot be a greater Testimony given than what has been by some observed, that not only the Greatest Masters have found in his Works the best and truest Principles of all their Sciences or Arts, but that the noblest Nations have derived from them the Original of their several Races, though it be hardly yet agreed, Whether his Story be True or Fiction. In short, these two immortal Poets must be allowed to have so much excelled in their kinds as to have exceeded all Comparison, to have even extinguished Emulation, and in a Manner confined true Poetry not only to their two Languages, but to their very Persons. And I am apt to believe so much of the true *Genius* of Poetry in general, and of its Elevation in these two Particulars, that I know not whether of all the Numbers of Mankind that live within the Compass of a Thousand Years, for one Man that is born capable of making such a Poet as *Homer* or *Virgil*, there may not be a Thousand born Capable of making as great Generals of Armies or Ministers of State as any the most Renowned in Story.

I do not here intend to make a further Critick upon Poetry, which were too great a Labour, nor to give Rules for it, which were as great a Presumption. Besides, there has been so much Paper blotted upon these Subjects in this Curious and Censuring Age, that 'tis all grown tedious or Repetition. The Modern *French* Wits (or Pretenders) have been very severe in their Censures and exact in their Rules, I think to very little Purpose; For I know not why they might not have contented themselves with those given by *Aristotle* and *Horace*, and have Translated them rather than Commented upon them, for all they have done has been no more, so as they seem, by their Writings of this kind, rather to have valued themselves than improved any body else. The Truth is, there is something in the *Genius* of Poetry too

Libertine to be confined to so many Rules; and whoever goes about to subject it to such Constraints loses both its Spirit and Grace, which are ever Native, and never learnt, even of the best Masters. 'Tis as if, to make excellent Honey, you should cut off the Wings of your Bees, confine them to their Hive or their Stands, and lay Flowers before them, such as you think the sweetest and like to yield the finest Extraction; you had as good pull out their Stings, and make arrant Drones of them. They must range through Fields as well as Gardens, choose such Flowers as they please, and by Proprieties and Scents they only know and distinguish. They must work up their Cells with Admirable Art, extract their Honey with infinite Labour, and sever it from the Wax with such Distinction and Choyce as belongs to none but themselves to perform or to judge.

It would be too much Mortification to these great Arbitrary Rulers among the *French* Writers or our own to Observe the worthy Productions that have been formed by their Rules, the Honour they have received in the World, or the Pleasure they have given Mankind. But to comfort them, I do not know there was any great Poet in *Greece* after the Rules of that Art layd down by *Aristotle*, nor in *Rome* after those by *Horace*, which yet none of our Moderns pretend to have out-done. Perhaps *Theocritus* and *Lucan* may be alledg'd against this Assertion; but the first offered no further than at Idils or Eclogues; and the last, though he must be avowed for a true and a happy *Genius*, and to have made some very high Flights, yet he is so unequal to himself, and his Muse is so young, that his Faults are too noted to allow his Pretences. *Fœliciter audet* is the true Character of *Lucan*, as of *Ovid*, *Lusit amabiliter*. After all, the utmost that can be atchieved or, I think, pretended by any Rules in this Art is but to hinder some men from being very ill Poets, but not to make any man

a very good one. To judge who is so, we need go no further for Instruction than three Lines of *Horace*:

Ille meum qui Pectus inaniter angit,
Irritat, mulcet, falsis terroribus implet,
Ut Magus, *&* *modo me* Thebis, *modo ponit* Athenis.

He is a Poet,

Who vainly anguishes my Breast,
Provokes, allays, and with false Terror fills,
Like a Magician, and now sets me down
In Thebes, *and now in* Athens.

Whoever does not affect and move the same present Passions in you that he represents in others, and at other times raise Images about you, as a Conjurer is said to do Spirits, Transport you to the Places and to the Persons he describes, cannot be judged to be a Poet, though his Measures are never so just, his Feet never so smooth, or his Sounds never so sweet.

But instead of Critick or Rules concerning Poetry, I shall rather turn my Thoughts to the History of it, and observe the Antiquity, the Uses, the Changes, the Decays, that have attended this great Empire of Wit.

It is, I think, generally agreed to have been the first sort of Writing that has been used in the World, and in several Nations to have preceded the very Invention or Usage of Letters. This last is certain in *America*, where the first *Spaniards* met with many strains of Poetry, and left several of them Translated into their Language, which seem to have flowed from a true Poetick Vein before any Letters were known in those Regions. The same is probable of the *Scythians*, the *Grecians*, and the *Germans*. *Aristotle* says the *Agathyrsi* had their Laws all in Verse; and *Tacitus*, that the *Germans* had no Annals nor Records but what were so; and for the *Grecian* Oracles delivered in them, we have no certain Account when they began, but rather reason to believe it was before the Introduction of

Letters from *Phœnicia* among them. *Pliny* tells it, as a thing known, that *Pherecides* was the first who Writ Prose in the *Greek* Tongue, and that he lived about the time of *Cyrus*, whereas *Homer* and *Hesiod* lived some Hundreds of Years before that Age, and *Orpheus, Linus, Musæus*, some Hundreds before them: And of the *Sybils*, several were before any of those, and in times as well as places whereof we have no clear Records now remaining. What *Solon* and *Pythagoras* Writ is said to have been in Verse, who were something older than *Cyrus*; and before them were *Archilocus, Simonides, Tyrtæus, Sappho, Stesichorus*, and several other Poets famous in their times. The same thing is reported of *Chaldæa, Syria*, and *China*; among the ancient *Western Goths*, our Ancestors, the *Runick* Poetry seems to have been as old as their Letters; and their Laws, their Precepts of Wisdom as well as their Records, their Religious Rites as well as their Charms and Incantations, to have been all in Verse.

Among the *Hebrews*, and even in Sacred Writ, the most antient is by some Learned Men esteemed to be the Book of *Job*, and that it was Written before the time of *Moses*, and that it was a Translation into *Hebrew*, out of the old *Chaldæan* or *Arabian* Language. It may probably be conjectured that he was not a *Jew*, from the place of his abode, which appears to have been Seated between the *Chaldæans* of one Side and the *Sabæans* (who were of *Arabia*) on the other; and by many Passages of that admirable and truly inspired Poem, the Author seems to have lived in some Parts near the Mouth of *Euphrates*, or the *Persian* Gulf, where he contemplated the Wonders of the Deep as well as the other Works of Nature common to those Regions. Nor is it easy to find any Traces of the *Mosaical* Rites or Institutions, either in the Divine Worship or the Morals related to in those Writings: For not only Sacrifices and Praises were much more antient in Religious

Service than the Age of *Moses*; But the Opinion of one Deity, and Adored without any Idol or Representation, was Professed and Received among the antient *Persians* and *Hetruscans* and *Chaldæans*. So that if *Job* was an *Hebrew*, 'tis probable he may have been of the Race of *Heber*, who lived in *Chaldæa*, or of *Abraham*, who is supposed to have left that Country for the Profession or Worship of one God, rather than from the Branch of *Isaac* and *Israel*, who lived in the Land of *Canaan*. Now I think it is out of Controversy that the Book of *Job* was Written Originally in Verse, and was a Poem upon the Subject of the Justice and Power of God, and in Vindication of his Providence against the common Arguments of Atheistical Men, who took occasion to dispute it from the usual Events of Human things, by which so many ill and impious Men seem Happy and Prosperous in the course of their Lives, and so many Pious and Just Men seem Miserable or Afflicted. The *Spanish* Translation of the *Jews* in *Ferrara*, which pretends to render the *Hebrew*, as near as could be, word for word, and for which all Translators of the Bible since have had great Regard, gives us the Two first Chapters and the Last from the seventh Verse in Prose, as an Historical Introduction and Conclusion of the Work, and all the rest in Verse, except the Transitions from one Part or Person of this Sacred Dialogue to another.

But if we take the Books of *Moses* to be the most antient in the *Hebrew* Tongue, yet the Song of *Moses* may probably have been Written before the rest; as that of *Deborah*, before the Book of *Judges*, being Praises sung to God upon the Victories or Successes of the *Israelites*, related in both. And I never read the last without observing in it as True and Noble Strains of Poetry and Picture as in any other Language whatsoever, in spight of all Disadvantages from Translations into so different Tongues and common Prose. If an Opinion of some Learned Men, both Modern

and Antient, could be allowed, that *Esdras* was the Writer or Compiler of the first Historical Parts of the Old Testament, though from the same Divine Inspiration as that of *Moses* and the other Prophets, then the Psalms of *David* would be the first Writings we find in *Hebrew*; and next to them, the Song of *Solomon*, which was written when he was young, and *Ecclesiastes* when he was old. So that from all sides, both Sacred and Prophane, It appears that *Poetry* was the first sort of Writing known and used in the several Nations of the World.

It may seem strange, I confess, upon the first thought, that a sort of Style so regular and so difficult should have grown in use before the other so easy and so loose: But if we consider what the first end of Writing was, it will appear probable from Reason as well as Experience; For the true and General End was but the Help of Memory in preserving that of Words and of Actions, which would otherwise have been lost and soon vanish away with the Transitory Passage of Human Breath and Life. Before the Discourses and Disputes of Philosophers began to busie or amuse the *Græcian* Wits, there was nothing Written in Prose, but either Laws, some short Sayings of Wise men, or some Riddles, Parables, or Fables, wherein were couched by the Antients many Strains of Natural or Moral Wisdom and Knowledge, and besides these some short Memorials of Persons, Actions, and of Times. Now 'tis obvious enough to conceive how much easier all such Writings should be Learnt and Remembred in Verse than in Prose, not only by the Pleasure of Measures and of Sounds, which gives a great Impression to Memory, but by the order of Feet, which makes a great Facility of Tracing one Word after another, by knowing what sort of Foot or Quantity must necessarily have preceded or followed the Words we retain and desire to make up.

This made Poetry so necessary before Letters were

invented, and so convenient afterwards; and shews that the great Honor and general Request wherein it has always been has not proceeded only from the Pleasure and Delight, but likewise from the Usefulness and Profit of Poetical Writings.

This leads me naturally to the Subjects of Poetry, which have been generally Praise, Instruction, Story, Love, Grief, and Reproach. Praise was the Subject of all the Songs and Psalms mentioned in Holy Writ, of the Hymns of *Orpheus*, of *Homer*, and many others; Of the *Carmina Secularia* in *Rome*, Composed all and Designed for the Honor of their Gods; Of *Pindar*, *Stesichorus*, and *Tyrtæus*, in the Praises of Virtue or Virtuous Men. The Subject of *Job* is Instruction concerning the Attributes of God and the Works of Nature. Those of *Simonides*, *Phocillides*, *Theognis*, and several other of the smaller *Greek* Poets, with what passes for *Pythagoras*, are Instructions in Morality; The first Book of *Hesiod* and *Virgils Georgicks*, in Agriculture, and *Lucretius* in the deepest natural Philosophy. Story is the proper Subject of *Heroick* Poems, as *Homer* and *Virgil* in their inimitable *Iliads* and *Æneids*; And *Fable*, which is a sort of Story, in the *Metamorphosis* of *Ovid*. The *Lyrick* Poetry has been chiefly Conversant about Love, tho' turned often upon Praise too; and the Vein of Pastorals and Eclogues has run the same course, as may be observed in *Theocrytus*, *Virgil*, and *Horace*, who was, I think, the first and last of true *Lyrick* Poets among the *Latins*. Grief has been always the Subject of *Elegy*, and Reproach that of *Satyr*. The *Dramatick* Poesy has been Composed of all these, but the chief end seems to have been Instruction, and under the disguise of Fables or the Pleasure of Story to shew the Beauties and the Rewards of Virtue, the Deformities and Misfortunes or Punishment of Vice; By Examples of both, to Encourage one, and Deter Men from the other; to

Reform ill Customs, Correct ill Manners, and Moderate all violent Passions. These are the general Subjects of both Parts, tho' Comedy give us but the Images of common Life, and Tragedy those of the greater and more extraordinary Passions and Actions among Men. To go further upon this Subject would be to tread so beaten Paths, that to Travel in them only raises Dust, and is neither of Pleasure nor of Use.

For the Changes that have happened in Poetry, I shall observe one Ancient, and the others that are Modern will be too Remarkable, in the Declines or Decays of this great Empire of Wit. The first Change of Poetry was made by Translating it into Prose, or Cloathing it in those loose Robes or common Veils that disguised or covered the true Beauty of its Features and Exactness of its Shape. This was done first by *Æsop* in *Greek*, but the Vein was much more antient in the *Eastern* Regions, and much in Vogue, as we may observe in the many Parables used in the old Testament as well as in the New. And there is a Book of Fables, of the Sort of *Æsop*'s, Translated out of *Persian*, and pretended to have been so into that Language out of the antient *Indian*; But though it seems Genuine of the *Eastern* Countries, yet I do not take it to be so old nor to have so much Spirit as the *Greek*. The next Succession of Poetry in Prose seems to have been in the *Miletian* Tales, which were a sort of little Pastoral Romances; and though much in request in old *Greece* and *Rome*, yet we have no Examples that I know of them, unless it be the *Longi Pastoralia*, which gives a Tast of the great Delicacy and Pleasure that was found so generally in those sort of Tales. The last Kind of Poetry in Prose is that which in latter Ages has over-run the World under the Name of Romances, which tho' it seems Modern and a Production of the *Gothick* Genius, yet the Writing is antient. The Remainders of *Petronius Arbiter* seem to

be of this Kind, and that which *Lucian* calls his True History. But the most antient that passes by the Name is *Heliodorus*, Famous for the Author's chusing to lose his Bishoprick rather than disown that Child of his Wit. The true Spirit or Vein of antient Poetry in this Kind seems to shine most in Sir *Philip Sidney*, whom I esteem both the greatest Poet and the Noblest Genius of any that have left Writings behind them and published in ours or any other modern Language,—a Person born capable not only of forming the greatest *Ideas*, but of leaving the noblest Examples, if the length of his Life had been equal to the excellence of his Wit and his Virtues.

With him I leave the Discourse of antient Poetry, and to discover the Decays of this Empire must turn to that of the modern, which was introduced after the Decays or rather Extinction of the old, as if, true Poetry being dead, an Apparition of it walked about. This mighty Change arrived by no smaller Occasions nor more ignoble Revolutions than those which destroyed the antient Empire and Government of *Rome*, and Erected so many New ones upon their Ruins, by the Invasions and Conquests or the general Inundations of the *Goths*, *Vandals*, and other Barbarous or Northern Nations, upon those Parts of *Europe* that had been subject to the *Romans*. After the Conquests made by *Cæsar* upon *Gaul* and the nearer Parts of *Germany*, which were continued and enlarged in the times of *Augustus* and *Tiberius* by their Lieutenants or Generals, great Numbers of *Germans* and *Gauls* resorted to the *Roman* Armies, and to the City it self, and habituated themselves there, as many *Spaniards*, *Syrians*, *Græcians* had done before upon the Conquest of those Countries. This mixture soon Corrupted the Purity of the *Latin* Tongue, so that in *Lucan*, but more in *Seneca*, we find a great and harsh Allay entered into the Style of the *Augustan* Age. After *Trajan* and *Adrian* had subdued

many *German* and *Scythian* Nations on both sides of the *Danube*, the Commerce of those barbarous People grew very frequent with the *Romans*; and I am apt to think that the little Verses ascribed to *Adrian* were in Imitation of the *Runick* Poetry. The *Scythicas Pati Pruinas* of *Florus* shews their Race or Clymate, and the first Rhyme that ever I read in *Latin*, with little Allusions of Letters or Syllables, is in that of *Adrian* at his Death:

O Animula vagula, blandula,
Quæ nunc abibis in loca?
Pallidula, lurida, timidula,
Nec, ut soles, dabis joca.

'Tis probable, the old Spirit of Poetry being lost or frighted away by those long and bloody Wars with such barbarous Enemies, this New Ghost began to appear in its room even about that Age, or else that *Adrian*, who affected that piece of Learning as well as others, and was not able to reach the old Vein, turned to a new one, which his Expeditions into those Countries made more allowable in an Emperor, and his Example recommended to others. In the time of *Boetius*, who lived under *Theodorick* in *Rome*, we find the *Latin* Poetry smell rank of this *Gothick* Imitation, and the old vein quite seared up.

After that Age Learning grew every day more and more obscured by that Cloud of Ignorance which, coming from the *North* and increasing with the Numbers and Successes of those barbarous People, at length overshadowed all *Europe* for so long together. The *Roman* Tongue began it self to fail or be disused, and by its Corruption made way for the Generation of three New Languages, in *Spain*, *Italy*, and *France*. The Courts of the Princes and Nobles, who were of the Conquering Nations, for several Ages used their *Gothick*, or *Franc*, or *Saxon* Tongues, which were mingled with those of *Germany*, where some of the *Goths* had sojourned long,

before they proceeded to their Conquests of the more *Southern* or *Western* Parts. Whereever the *Roman* Colonies had long remained and their Language had been generally spoken, the common People used that still, but vitiated with the base allay of their Provincial Speech. This in *Charlemain*'s time was called in *France, Rustica Romana,* and in *Spain,* during the *Gothick* Reigns there, *Romance;* but in *England,* from whence all the *Roman* Souldiers, and great Numbers of the *Britains* most accustomed to their Commerce and Language, had been drained for the Defence of *Gaul* against the barbarous Nations that invaded it about the time of *Valentinian,* that Tongue (being wholly extinguish't, as well as their own) made way for the intire use of the *Saxon* Language. With these Changes the antient Poetry was wholly lost in all these Countries, and a new sort grew up by degrees, which was called by a new Name of Rhimes, with an easy Change of the *Gothick* Word *Runes,* and not from the *Greek Rythmes,* as is vulgarly supposed.

Runes was properly the Name of the Antient *Gothick* Letters or Characters, which were Invented first or introduced by *Odin,* in the Colony or Kingdom of the *Getes* or *Goths,* which he Planted in the *North-West* Parts and round the *Baltick* Sea, as has been before related. But because all the Writings they had among them for many Ages were in Verse, it came to be the common Name of all sorts of Poetry among the *Goths,* and the Writers or Composers of them were called *Runers,* or *Rymers.* They had likewise another Name for them, or for some sorts of them, which was *Vüses,* or *Wises*; and because the Sages of that Nation expressed the best of their Thoughts, and what Learning and Prudence they had, in these kind of Writings, they that succeeded best and with most Applause were termed Wise-men, the good Sense or Learning or useful Knowledge contained in

them was called Wisdom, and the pleasant or facetious Vein among them was called Wit, which was applied to all Spirit or Race of Poetry, where it was found in any Men, and was generally pleasing to those that heard or read them.

Of these *Runes* there were in use among the *Goths* above a hundred several sorts, some Composed in longer, some in shorter Lines, some equal and others unequal, with many different Cadencies, Quantities, or Feet, which in the pronouncing make many different sorts of Original or Natural Tunes. Some were Framed with Allusions of Words or Consonance of Syllables or of Letters, either in the same Line, or in the Dystick, or by alternate Succession and Resemblance, which made a sort of Gingle that pleased the ruder Ears of that People. And because their Language was composed most of Monosyllables and of so great Numbers, many must end in the same Sound; another Sort of *Runes* were made with the Care and Study of ending two Lines, or each other of four Lines, with Words of the same sound, which being the easiest, requiring less Art and needing less Spirit, because a certain Chime in the Sounds supplied that want and pleased common Ears, this in time grew the most general among all the *Gothick* Colonies in *Europe*, and made Rhymes or Runes pass for the modern Poetry in these Parts of the World.

This was not used only in their modern Languages, but, during those ignorant Ages, even in that barbarous *Latin* which remained, and was preserved among the *Monks* and *Priests*, to distinguish them by some shew of Learning from the Laity, who might well admire it, in what Degree soever, and Reverence the Professors, when they themselves could neither write nor read, even in their own Language; I mean not only the vulgar Lay men, but even the Generality of Nobles, Barons, and

Princes among them; and this lasted till the antient Learning and Languages began to be restored in *Europe* about Two Hundred Years ago.

The common vein of the *Gothick Runes* was what is Termed *Dithyrambick*, and was of a raving or rambling sort of Wit or Invention, loose and flowing, with little Art or Confinement to any certain Measures or Rules; yet some of it wanted not the true Spirit of Poetry in some Degree, or that natural Inspiration which has been said to arise from some Spark of Poetical Fire wherewith particular Men are born. And such as it was, it served the turn, not only to please, but even to charm the Ignorant and Barbarous Vulgar, where it was in use. This made the *Runers* among the *Goths* as much in request and admired as any of the antient and most celebrated Poets were among the Learned Nations; for among the blind, he that has one Eye is a Prince. They were as well as the others thought inspired, and the Charms of their *Runick* Conceptions were generally esteemed Divine, or Magical at least.

The subjects of them were various, but commonly the same with those already observed in the true antient Poetry. Yet this Vein was chiefly imployed upon the Records of Bold and Martial Actions, and the Praises of Valiant Men that had Fought Successfully or Dyed Bravely; and these Songs or Ballads were usually sung at Feasts, or in Circles of Young or Idle Persons, and served to inflame the Humour of War, of Slaughter, and of Spoils among them. More refined Honour or Love had little part in the Writings, because it had little in the Lives or Actions of those fierce People and bloody Times. Honour among them consisted in Victory, and Love in Rapes and in Lust.

But as the true Flame of Poetry was rare among them, and the rest was but Wild Fire that Sparkled or rather

Crackled a while, and soon went out with little Pleasure or Gazing of the Beholders, Those *Runers* who could not raise Admiration by the Spirit of their Poetry endeavoured to do it by another, which was that of Enchantments: This came in to supply the Defect of that sublime and Marvellous, which has been found both in Poetry and Prose among the Learned Antients. The *Gothick Runers*, to Gain and Establish the Credit and Admiration of their Rhymes, turned the use of them very much to Incantations and Charms, pretending by them to raise Storms, to Calm the Seas, to cause Terror in their Enemies, to Transport themselves in the Air, to Conjure Spirits, to Cure Diseases, and Stanch Bleeding Wounds, to make Women kind or easy, and Men hard or invulnerable, as one of their most antient *Runers* affirms of himself and his own Atchievments, by Force of these Magical Arms. The Men or Women who were thought to perform such Wonders or Enchantments were, from *Vüses*, or *Wises*, the Name of those Verses wherein their Charms were conceived, called *Wizards* or *Witches*.

Out of this Quarry seem to have been raised all those Trophees of Enchantment that appear in the whole Fabrick of the old *Spanish* Romances, which were the Productions of the *Gothick* Wit among them during their Reign; and after the Conquests of *Spain* by the *Saracens*, they were applied to the long Wars between them and the Christians. From the same perhaps may be derived all the visionary Tribe of *Faries*, *Elves*, and *Goblins*, of *Sprites* and of *Bul-beggars*, that serve not only to fright Children into whatever their Nurses please, but sometimes, by lasting Impressions, to disquiet the sleeps and the very Lives of Men and Women, till they grow to Years of Discretion; and that, God knows, is a Period of time which some People Arrive to but very late, and perhaps others never. At least, this belief prevailed so far among the *Goths* and

their Races, that all sorts of Charms were not only Attributed to their *Runes* or *Verses*, but to their very Characters; so that, about the Eleventh Century, they were forbidden and abolished in *Sweden*, as they had been before in *Spain*, by Civil and Ecclesiastical Commands or Constitutions; and what has been since recovered of that Learning or Language has been fetcht as far as *Ysland* it self.

How much of this Kind and of this Credulity remained even to our own Age may be observed by any Man that Reflects, so far as Thirty or Forty Years, how often Avouched, and how generally Credited, were the Stories of *Fairies*, *Sprites*, *Witchcrafts*, and *Enchantments*. In some Parts of *France*, and not longer ago, the common People believed certainly there were *Lougaroos*, or Men turned into Wolves; and I remember several *Irish* of the same mind. The Remainders are woven into our very Language: *Mara*, in old *Runick*, was a *Goblin* that seized upon Men asleep in their Beds, and took from them all Speech and Motion; Old *Nicka* was a Sprite that came to strangle People who fell into the Water; *Bo* was a fierce *Gothick* Captain, Son of *Odin*, whose Name was used by his Souldiers when they would Fright or Surprise their Enemies; and the Proverb of Rhyming *Rats to Death* came, I suppose, from the same Root.

There were, not longer since than the time I have mentioned, some Remainders of the *Runick* Poetry among the *Irish*. The Great Men of their Septs, among the many Offices of their Family, which continued always in the same Races, had not only a *Physician*, a *Hunts-man*, a *Smith*, and such like, but a *Poet* and a *Tale-teller*. The first Recorded and Sung the Actions of their Ancestors, and Entertained the Company at Feasts: The latter Amuzed them with Tales when they were Melancholy and could not sleep. And a very Gallant Gentleman of the

North of *Ireland* has told me of his own Experience, That, in his Wolf-Huntings there, when he used to be abroad in the Mountains three or four Days together, and lay very ill a Nights, so as he could not well sleep, they would bring him one of these *Tale-tellers*, that, when he lay down, would begin a Story of a King, or a Gyant, a Dwarf and a Damosel, and such rambling stuff, and continue it all Night long in such an even Tone that you heard it going on whenever you awaked; and he believed nothing any Physitians give could have so good and so innocent effect, to make Men Sleep in any Pains or Distempers of Body or Mind. I remember, in my youth, some Persons of our Country to have said Grace in Rhymes, and others their constant Prayers; and 'tis vulgar enough that some Deeds or Conveyances of Land have been so since the Conquest.

In such poor wretched Weeds as these was Poetry cloathed, during those shades of Ignorance that overspread all *Europe* for so many Ages after the Sun-set of the *Roman* Learning and Empire together, which were Succeeded by so many New Dominions or Plantations of the *Gothick* Swarms, and by a New Face of Customs, Habit, Language, and almost of Nature. But upon the dawn of a New Day, and the Resurrection of other Sciences, with the Two Learned Languages, among us, This of Poetry began to appear very early, tho' very unlike it self, and in shapes as well as Cloaths, in Humor and in Spirit, very different from the Antient. It was now all in Rhyme, after the *Gothick* fashion; for indeed none of the several Dialects of that Language or Allay would bear the Composure of such Feet and Measures as were in use among the *Greeks* and *Latins*; and some that attempted it soon left it off, despairing of Success. Yet, in this new Dress, Poetry was not without some Charms, especially those of Grace and Sweetness, and the Oar begun to shine

in the Hands and Works of the first Refiners. *Petrach*, *Ronsard*, *Spencer* met with much Applause upon the Subjects of Love, Praise, Grief, Reproach. *Ariosto* and *Tasso* entred boldly upon the Scene of *Heroick* Poems, but, having not Wings for so high Flights, began to Learn of the old Ones, fell upon their Imitations, and chiefly of *Virgil*, as far as the Force of their Genius or Disadvantage of New Languages and Customs would allow. The Religion of the Gentiles had been woven into the Contexture of all the antient Poetry with a very agreable mixture, which made the Moderns affect to give that of Christianity a place also in their Poems. But the true Religion was not found to become Fiction so well as a false had done, and all their Attempts of this kind seemed rather to debase Religion than to heighten Poetry. *Spencer* endeavoured to Supply this with Morality, and to make Instruction instead of Story the Subject of an *Epick* Poem. His Execution was Excellent, and his Flights of Fancy very Noble and High, but his Design was Poor, and his Moral lay so bare that it lost the Effect: 'tis true, the Pill was Gilded, but so thin that the Colour and the Taste were too easily discovered.

After these three, I know none of the Moderns that have made any Atchievments in *Heroick* Poetry worth Recording. The Wits of the Age soon left off such bold Adventures, and turned to other Veins, as if, not worthy to sit down at the Feast, they contented themselves with the Scraps, with Songs and Sonnets, with Odes and Elegies, with Satyrs and Panegyricks, and what we call Copies of Verses upon any Subjects or Occasions, wanting either Genius or Application for Nobler or more Laborious Productions, as *Painters* that cannot Succeed in great Pieces turn to Miniature.

But the modern Poets, to value this small Coyn, and make it pass, tho' of so much a baser Metal than the old,

gave it a New Mixture from Two Veins which were little known or little esteemed among the Ancients. There were indeed certain *Fairyes* in the old Regions of Poetry, called *Epigrams*, which seldom reached above the Stature of Two or Four or Six Lines, and which, Being so short, were all turned upon Conceit, or some sharp Hits of Fancy or Wit. The only Ancient of this kind among the *Latins* were the *Priapeia*, which were little Voluntaries or Extemporaries Written upon the ridiculous Woodden Statues of *Priapus* among the Gardens of *Rome*. In the decays of the *Roman* Learning and Wit as well as Language, *Martial*, *Ausonius*, and others fell into this Vein, and applied it indifferently to all Subjects, which was before Restrained to one, and Drest it something more cleanly than it was Born. This Vein of Conceit seemed proper for such Scraps or Splinters into which Poetry was broken, and was so eagerly followed, as almost to over-run all that was Composed in our several modern Languages. The *Italian*, the *French*, the *Spanish*, as well as *English*, were for a great while full of nothing else but Conceit. It was an Ingredient that gave Taste to Compositions which had little of themselves; 'twas a Sauce that gave Point to Meat that was Flat, and some Life to Colours that were Fading; and, in short, those who could not furnish Spirit supplied it with this Salt, which may preserve Things or Bodys that are Dead, but is, for ought I know, of little use to the Living, or necessary to Meats that have much or pleasing Tasts of their own. However it were, this Vein first over-flowed our modern Poetry, and with so little Distinction or Judgment that we would have Conceit as well as Rhyme in every Two Lines, and run through all our long Scribbles as well as the short, and the whole Body of the Poem, whatever it is. This was just as if a Building should be nothing but Ornament, or Cloaths nothing but Trimming; as if a Face should be covered over with black

Patches, or a Gown with Spangles; which is all I shall say of it.

Another Vein which has entred and helpt to Corrupt our modern Poesy is that of Ridicule, as if nothing pleased but what made one Laugh, which yet come from Two very different Affections of the Mind; for as Men have no Disposition to Laugh at things they are most pleased with, so they are very little pleased with many things they Laught at.

But this mistake is very general, and such modern Poets as found no better way of pleasing thought they could not fail of it by Ridiculing. This was Encouraged by finding Conversation run so much into the same Vein, and the Wits in Vogue to take up with that Part of it which was formerly left to those that were called Fools, and were used in great Families only to make the Company Laugh. What Opinion the *Romans* had of this Character appears in those Lines of *Horace*:

> —— *Absentem qui rodit amicum,*
> *Qui non defendit alio culpante, solutos*
> *Qui captat risus hominum famamque dicacis,*
> *Fingere qui non visa potest, Commissa tacere*
> *Qui nequit, Hic Niger est, Hunc tu,* Romane, *caveto;*

And 'tis pity the Character of a Wit in one Age should be so like that of a Black in another.

Rablais seems to have been Father of the Ridicule, a Man of Excellent and Universal Learning as well as Wit; and tho' he had too much Game given him for *Satyr* in that Age, by the Customs of Courts and of Convents, of Processes and of Wars, of Schools and of Camps, of Romances and Legends, Yet he must be Confest to have kept up his Vein of Ridicule by saying many things so Malicious, so Smutty, and so Prophane, that either a Prudent, a Modest, or a Pious Man could not have afforded, tho' he

had never so much of that Coyn about him ; and it were to be wished that the Wits who have followed his Vein had not put too much Value upon a Dress that better Understandings would not wear, at least in publick, and upon a compass they gave themselves which other Men would not take. The Matchless Writer of *Don Quixot* is much more to be admired for having made up so excellent a Composition of Satyr or Ridicule without those Ingredients, and seems to be the best and highest Strain that ever was or will be reached by that Vein.

It began first in Verse with an *Italian* Poem, called *La Secchia Rapita*, was pursued by *Scarron* in *French* with his *Virgil* Travesty, and in *English* by Sir *John Mince*, *Hudibras*, and *Cotton*, and with greater height of *Burlesque* in the *English* than, I think, in any other Language. But let the Execution be what it will, the Design, the Custom, and Example are very pernicious to Poetry, and indeed to all Virtue and Good Qualities among Men, which must be disheartened by finding how unjustly and undistinguish't they fall under the lash of Raillery, and this Vein of Ridiculing the Good as well as the Ill, the Guilty and the Innocent together. 'Tis a very poor tho' common Pretence to merit, to make it appear by the Faults of other Men. A mean Wit or Beauty may pass in a Room, where the rest of the Company are allowed to have none ; 'tis something to sparkle among Diamonds, but to shine among *Pebbles* is neither Credit nor Value worth the pretending.

Besides these two Veins brought in to supply the Defects of the modern Poetry, much Application has been made to the Smoothness of Language or Style, which has at the best but the Beauty of Colouring in a Picture, & can never make a good one without Spirit and Strength. The Academy set up by Cardinal *Richlieu* to amuse the Wits of that Age and Country, and divert them from raking into his Politicks and Ministery, brought this in

Vogue; and the *French* Wits have for this last Age been in a manner wholly turned to the Refinement of their Language, and indeed with such Success that it can hardly be excelled, and runs equally through their Verse and their Prose. The same Vein has been likewise much Cultivated in our modern *English* Poetry; and by such poor Recruits have the broken Forces of this Empire been of late made up; with what Success, I leave to be judged by such as consider it in the former Heights and the present Declines both of Power and of Honour; but this will not discourage, however it may affect, the true Lovers of this Mistriss, who must ever think her a Beauty in Rags as well as in Robes.

Among these many Decays, there is yet one sort of Poetry that seems to have succeeded much better with our Moderns than any of the rest, which is *Dramatick*, or that of the Stage. In this the *Italian*, the *Spanish*, and the *French* have all had their different Merit, and received their just Applauses. Yet I am deceived if our *English* has not in some kind excelled both the Modern and the Antient, which has been by Force of a Vein Natural perhaps to our Country, and which with us is called Humour, a Word peculiar to our Language too, and hard to be expressed in any other; nor is it, that I know of, found in any Foreign Writers, unless it be *Moliere*, and yet his it self has too much of the Farce to pass for the same with ours. *Shakespear* was the first that opened this Vein upon our Stage, which has run so freely and so pleasantly ever since, that I have often wondered to find it appear so little upon any others, being a Subject so proper for them, since Humour is but a Picture of particular Life, as Comedy is of general; and tho' it represents Dispositions and Customs less common, yet they are not less natural than those that are more frequent among Men; for if Humour it self be forced, it loses all the Grace;

which has been indeed the Fault of some of our Poets most Celebrated in this kind.

It may seem a Defect in the antient Stage that the Characters introduced were so few, and those so common, as a Covetous Old Man, an Amorous Young, a Witty Wench, a Crafty Slave, a Bragging Soldier. The Spectators met nothing upon the Stage, but what they met in the Streets and at every Turn. All the Variety is drawn only from different and uncommon Events, whereas if the Characters are so too, the Diversity and the Pleasure must needs be the more. But as of most general Customs in a Country there is usually some Ground from the Nature of the People or the Clymat, so there may be amongst us for this Vein of our Stage, and a greater variety of Humor in the Picture, because there is a greater variety in the Life. This may proceed from the Native Plenty of our Soyl, the unequalness of our Clymat, as well as the Ease of our Government, and the Liberty of Professing Opinions and Factions, which perhaps our Neighbours may have about them, but are forced to disguise, and thereby they may come in time to be extinguish't. Plenty begets Wantonness and Pride: Wantonness is apt to invent, and Pride scorns to imitate. Liberty begets Stomach or Heart, and Stomach will not be Constrained. Thus we come to have more Originals, and more that appear what they are; we have more Humour, because every Man follows his own, and takes a Pleasure, perhaps a Pride, to shew it.

On the contrary, where the People are generally poor, and forced to hard Labour, their Actions and Lives are all of a Piece; where they serve hard Masters, they must follow his Examples as well as Commands, and are forced upon Imitation in small Matters as well as Obedience in great: So that some Nations look as if they were cast all by one Mould, or Cut out all by one Pattern,—at least the common People in one, and the Gentlemen in another:

They seem all of a sort in their Habits, their Customs, and even their Talk and Conversation, as well as in the Application and Pursuit of their Actions and their Lives.

Besides all this, there is another sort of Variety amongst us, which arises from our Clymat, and the Dispositions it Naturally produces. We are not only more unlike one another than any Nation I know, but we are more unlike our selves too at several times, and owe to our very Air some ill Qualities as well as many good. We may allow some Distempers Incident to our Clymat, since so much Health, Vigor, and Length of Life have been generally Ascribed to it; for among the *Greek* and *Roman* Authors themselves, we shall find the *Britains* observed to Live the longest, and the *Ægyptians* the shortest, of any Nations that were known in those Ages. Besides, I think none will Dispute the Native Courage of our Men and Beauty of our Women, which may be elsewhere as great in Particulars, but no where so in General; they may be (what is said of Diseases) as Acute in other Places, but with us they are Epidemical. For my own Part, who have Conversed much with Men of other Nations, and such as have been both in great Imployments and Esteem, I can say very impartially that I have not observed among any so much true Genius as among the *English*: No where more Sharpness of Wit, more Pleasantness of Humour, more Range of Fancy, more Penetration of Thought or Depth of Reflection among the better Sort: No where more Goodness of Nature and of Meaning, nor more Plainness of Sense and of Life than among the common Sort of Country People, nor more blunt Courage and Honesty than among our Sea-men.

But, with all this, our Country must be contest to be what a great Foreign Physitian called it, The Region of Spleen, which may arise a good deal from the great uncertainty and many suddain Changes of our Weather in all

Seasons of the Year. And how much these Affect the Heads and Hearts, especially of the finest Tempers, is hard to be Believed by Men whose Thoughts are not turned to such Speculations. This makes us unequal in our Humours, inconstant in our Passions, uncertain in our Ends, and even in our Desires. Besides, our different Opinions in Religion, and the Factions they have Raised or Animated for Fifty Years past, have had an ill Effect upon our Manners and Customs, inducing more Avarice, Ambition, Disguise, with the usual Consequences of them, than were before in our Constitution. From all this it may happen that there is no where more true Zeal in the many different Forms of Devotion, and yet no where more Knavery under the Shews and Pretences. There are no where so many Disputers upon Religion, so many Reasoners upon Government, so many Refiners in Politicks, so many Curious Inquisitives, so many Pretenders to Business and State-Imployments, greater Porers upon Books, nor Plodders after Wealth. And yet no where more Abandoned Libertines, more refined Luxurists, Extravagant Debauches, Conceited Gallants, more Dabblers in Poetry as well as Politicks, in Philosophy, and in Chymistry. I have had several Servants far gone in Divinity, others in Poetry; have known, in the Families of some Friends, a Keeper deep in the *Rosycrucia* Principles, and a Laundress firm in those of *Epicurus*. What Effect soever such a Composition or Medly of Humours among us may have upon our Lives or our Government, it must needs have a good one upon our Stage, and has given admirable Play to our Comical Wits: So that in my Opinion there is no Vein of that sort, either Antient or Modern, which Excels or Equals the Humour of our Plays. And for the rest, I cannot but observe, ⟨to⟩ the Honour of our Country, that the good Qualities amongst us seem to be Natural, and the ill ones more Accidental, and such as would be easily Changed

by the Examples of Princes, and by the Precepts of Laws; such, I mean, as should be Designed to Form Manners, to Restrain Excesses, to Encourage Industry, to Prevent Mens Expences beyond their Fortunes, to Countenance Virtue, and Raise that True Esteem due to Plain Sense and Common Honesty.

But to Spin off this Thread which is already Grown too long: What Honour and Request the antient Poetry has Lived in may not only be Observed from the Universal Reception and Use in all Nations from *China* to *Peru*, from *Scythia* to *Arabia*, but from the Esteem of the Best and the Greatest Men as well as the Vulgar. Among the *Hebrews*, *David* and *Solomon*, the Wisest Kings, *Job* and *Jeremiah*, the Holiest Men, were the best Poets of their Nation and Language. Among the *Greeks*, the Two most renowned Sages and Law-givers were *Lycurgus* and *Solon*, whereof the Last is known to have excelled in Poetry, and the first was so great a Lover of it, That to his Care and Industry we are said by some Authors to owe the Collection and Preservation of the loose and scattered Pieces of *Homer* in the Order wherein they have since appeared. *Alexander* is reported neither to have Travelled nor Slept without those admirable Poems always in his Company. *Phalaris*, that was Inexorable to all other Enemies, Relented at the Charms of *Stesichorus* his Muse. Among the *Romans*, the Last and Great *Scipio* passed the soft Hours of his Life in the Conversation of *Terence*, and was thought to have a Part in the composition of his Comedies. *Cæsar* was an Excellent Poet as well as Orator, and Composed a Poem in his Voyage from *Rome* to *Spain*, Relieving the Tedious Difficulties of his March with the Entertainments of his Muse. *Augustus* was not only a Patron, but a Friend and Companion of *Virgil* and *Horace*, and was himself both an Admirer of Poetry and a pretender too, as far as his Genius would reach or his busy Scene allow. 'Tis

true, since his Age we have few such Examples of great Princes favouring or affecting Poetry, and as few perhaps of great Poets deserving it. Whether it be that the fierceness of the *Gothick* Humors, or Noise of their perpetual Wars, frighted it away, or that the unequal mixture of the Modern Languages would not bear it, Certain it is, That the great Heighths and Excellency both of Poetry and Musick fell with the *Roman* Learning and Empire, and have never since recovered the Admiration and Applauses that before attended them. Yet such as they are amongst us, they must be confest to be the Softest and Sweetest, the most General and most Innocent Amusements of common Time and Life. They still find Room in the Courts of Princes and the Cottages of Shepherds. They serve to Revive and Animate the dead Calm of poor or idle Lives, and to Allay or Divert the violent Passions and Perturbations of the greatest and the busiest Men. And both these Effects are of equal use to Humane Life; for the Mind of Man is like the Sea, which is neither agreable to the Beholder nor the Voyager in a Calm or in a Storm, but is so to both when a little Agitated by gentle Gales; and so the Mind, when moved by soft and easy Passions or Affections. I know very well that many, who pretend to be Wise by the Forms of being Grave, are apt to despise both Poetry and Musick as Toys and trifles too light for the Use or Entertainment of serious Men. But whoever find themselves wholly insensible to these Charms would, I think, do well to keep their own Counsel, for fear of Reproaching their own Temper, and bringing the Goodness of their Natures, if not of their Understandings, into Question. It may be thought at least an ill Sign, if not an ill Constitution, since some of the Fathers went so far as to esteem the Love of Musick a Sign of Predestination, as a thing Divine, and Reserved for the Felicities of Heaven it self. While this World lasts, I doubt not but the Pleasure and Request

of these Two Entertainments will do so too; and happy those that content themselves with these or any other so Easy and so Innocent, and do not trouble the World or other Men, because they cannot be quiet themselves, though no body hurts them!

When all is done, Human Life is, at the greatest and the best, but like a froward Child, that must be Play'd with and Humor'd a little to keep it quiet till it falls asleep, and then the Care is over.

GERARD LANGBAINE

FROM *AN ACCOUNT OF THE ENGLISH DRAMATICK POETS*

1691

JOHN DRYDEN, *Esq.*,

A PERSON whose Writings have made him remarkable to all sorts of Men, as being for a long time much read and in great Vogue. It is no wonder that the Characters given of him, by such as are or would be thought Wits, are various, since even those who are generally allow'd to be such are not yet agreed in their Verdicts. And as their Judgments are different as to his Writings, so are their Censures no less repugnant to the Managery of his Life, some excusing what these condemn, and some exploding what those commend: So that we can scarce find them agreed in any One thing, save this, That he was Poet Laureat and Historiographer to His late Majesty. For this and other Reasons, I shall wave all Particularities of his Life, and let pass the Historiographer, that I may keep the closer to the Poet, toward whom I shall use my accustom'd Freedome; and having spoken my Sentiments of his Predecessors Writings, shall venture without partiality to exercise my slender Judgment in giving a Censure of his Works.

Mr. *Dryden* is the most Voluminous Dramatick Writer of our Age, he having already extant above Twenty Plays of his own writing, as the Title-page of each would perswade the World, tho' some people have been so bold as to call the Truth of this in question, and to propogate in the world another Opinion.

His Genius seems to me to incline to Tragedy and Satyr

rather than Comedy; and methinks he writes much better in *Heroicks* than in *blank Verse*. His very Enemies must grant that *there* his Numbers are sweet and flowing, that he has with success practic'd the new way of Versifying introduc'd by his Predecessor, Mr. *Waller*, and follow'd since with success by Sr. *John Denham* and others. But for Comedy, he is for the most part beholding to French Romances and Plays, not only for his Plots, but even a great part of his Language; tho' at the same time he has the confidence to prevaricate, if not flatly deny the Accusation, and equivocally to vindicate himself; as in the Preface to the *Mock Astrologer*, where he mentions *Thomas Corneille*'s *le Feint Astrologue* because 'twas translated, and the Theft prov'd upon him, but never says One word of *Molliere*'s *Depit amoureux*, from whence the greatest part of *Wild-blood* and *Jacinta* (which he owns are the chiefest parts of the Play) are stollen. I cannot pass by his Vanity[1] in saying, 'That those who have called *Virgil*, *Terence*, and *Tasso* Plagiaries (tho' they much injur'd them) had yet a better Colour for their Accusation'; nor his Confidence in sheltring himself under the protection of their great Names, by affirming, 'That he is able to say the same for his Play that he urges for their Poems; *viz.* That the Body of his Play is his own, and so are all the Ornaments of Language and Elocution in them.' I appeal only to those who are vers'd in the French Tongue, and will take the pains to compare this Comedy with the French Plays above-mention'd, if this be not somewhat more than Mental Reservation, or, to use one of his own Expressions,[2] *A Sophisticated Truth, with an allay of Lye in't.*

Nor are his Characters less borrow'd in his Tragedies and the serious parts of his Tragi-Comedies, as I shall observe in the sequel. It shall suffice me at present to

[1] Preface to *Mock Astrologer*.
[2] *Love in a Nunnery*, p. 59.

shew how Magisterially he huffs at, and domineers over, the French in his Preface to the *Conquest of Granada*. 'I shall never (says he) subject my Characters to the *French* Standard, where Love and Honour are to be weigh'd by Drams and Scruples; yet where I have design'd the patterns of exact Virtue, such as in this Play are the Parts of *Almahide*, of *Oxmyn*, and *Benzaida*, I may safely challenge the best of theirs.' Now the Reader is desir'd to observe that all the Characters of that Play are stollen from the French; so that Mr. *Dryden* took a secure way to Conquest, for, having robb'd them of their Weapons, he might safely challenge them and beat them too, especially having gotten *Ponce de Leon*[1] on his side, in disguise, and under the Title of *Almanzor*; and should *Monsieur de Voiture* presume to lay claim to his own Song, *L'Amour sous sa Loy*, &c.,[2] which Mr. *Dryden* has robb'd him of, and plac'd in the Play of Sr. *Martin Marr-all* (being that Song which begins, *Blind Love to this Hour*, &c.), our Poet would go nigh to beat him with a Staff of his own Rimes, with as much ease as Sr. *Martin* defeated the Bailiffs in rescue of his Rival.

But had he only extended his Conquests over the *French* Poets, I had not medled in this Affair, and he might have taken part with *Achilles* and *Rinaldo* against *Cyrus* and *Oroondates*, without my engaging in this Forreign War: but when I found him flusht with his Victory over the great *Scudery*, and with *Almanzor's* assistance triumphing over the noble Kingdome of *Granada*; and not content with Conquests abroad, like another *Julius Cæsar*, turning his Arms upon his own Country; and as if the proscription of his Contemporaries Reputation were not sufficient to satiate his implacable thirst after Fame, endeavouring to demolish the Statues and Monuments of his Ancestors, the

[1] The Chief *Hero* in a Romance call'd *Almahide*.
[2] Poesies *de M. de Voiture*, p. 457.

Works of those his Illustrious Predecessors, *Shakespear*, *Fletcher*, and *Johnson*; I was resolv'd to endeavour the rescue and preservation of those excellent Trophies of Wit, by raising the *Posse-comitatus* upon this Poetick *Almanzor*, to put a stop to his Spoils upon his own Country-men. Therefore I present my self a Champion in the Dead Poets Cause, to vindicate their Fame with the same Courage, tho' I hope different Integrity, than *Almanzor* engag'd in defence of Queen *Almahide*, when he bravely Swore like a *Hero* that his Cause was right, and She was innocent, tho' just before the Combat, when alone, he own'd he knew her false:[1]

I have out-fac'd my self, and justify'd
What I knew false to all the World beside.
She was as Faithless as her Sex could be;
And now I am alone, she's so to me.

But to wave this digression, and proceed to the Vindication of the Ancients, which that I may the better perform for the Readers Diversion, and that Mr. *Dryden* may not tell me that what I have said is but *gratis dictum*, I shall set down the Heads of his Depositions against our ancient English Poets, and then endeavour the Defence of those great Men, who certainly deserv'd much better of Posterity than to be so disrespectively treated as he has used them.

Mr. *Shakespear*, as first in Seniority, I think ought to lead the Van, and therefore I shall give you his Account of him as follows:[2] '*Shakespear*, who many times has written better than any Poet in any Language, is yet so far from writing Wit always, or expressing that Wit according to the dignity of the Subject, that he writes in many places below——the dullest Writers of ours, or any precedent Age. He is the very *Janus* of Poets; he wears almost every where two Faces: and you have scarce begun to admire the One, e're you despise the other.' Speaking of

[1] Act 5, Sc. 1.

[2] Postscript to *Granada*, pag. 146.

Mr. *Shakespear's* Plots, he says they were lame,[1] and that 'many of them were made up of some ridiculous, incoherent Story, which in one Play many times took up the business of an Age. I suppose (says he) I need not name *Pericles* Prince of *Tyre*, nor the Historical Plays of *Shakespear*; Besides many of the rest, as the *Winters Tale*, *Love's Labour lost*, *Measure for Measure*, which were either grounded on Impossibilities, or at least so meanly written that the Comedy neither caused your Mirth nor the serious part your Concernment.' He says further,[2] 'Most of *Shakespear's* Plays, I mean the Stories of them, are to be found in the *Heccatomouthi* or *Hundred Novels of Cinthio*. I have my self read in his Italian that of *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Moor of Venice*, and many others of them.'

He Characterises Mr. *Fletcher*, who writ after Mr. *Shakespear*,[3] 'As a Person that neither understood correct Plotting nor that which they call *The Decorum of the Stage*,' of which he gives several Instances out of *Philaster*, *Humourous Lieutenant*, and *Faithful Shepherdess*, which are too long to be here inserted. In another place he speaks of *Fletcher* thus:[4] 'Neither is the Luxuriance of *Fletcher* a less fault than the Carelessness of *Shakespear*. He does not well always; and when he does, he is a true English-man: he knows not when to give over. If he wakes in one Scene, he commonly slumbers in another; and if he pleases you in the first three Acts, he is frequently so tired with his Labour, that he goes heavily in the Fourth, and sinks under his Burthen in the Fifth.' Speaking of his Plots[5] he says: '*Beaumont* and *Fletcher* had most of theirs from *Spanish* Novels: witness *The Chances*, *The Spanish Curate*, *Rule a Wife and have a Wife*, *The little French Lawyer*, and so many others of them as compose the greatest part of their Volume in Folio.'

[1] Postscript, pag. 143. [2] Preface to *Mock Astrologer*, B. 4.
[3] Postscript, *p.* 144. [4] *Ibid.*, p. 146. [5] Pref. *Astrol.*, B. 4.

As to the great *Ben Johnson*, he deals not much better with him, though he would be thought to admire him; and if he praise him in one Page, he wipes it out in another: thus, tho' he calls him '*The most Judicious of Poets*'[1] and '*Inimitable Writer*,' yet, he says, 'his Excellency lay in the low Characters of Vice and Folly. When at any time (says he) *Ben* aim'd at Wit in the stricter sence, that is, sharpness of Conceit, he was forc'd to borrow from the Ancients (as to my knowledge he did very much from *Plautus*), or when he trusted himself alone, often fell into meanness of expression. Nay, he was not free from the lowest and most groveling Kind of Wit, which we call *Clenches*, of which *Every Man in his Humour* is infinitely full, and, which is worse, the wittiest Persons in the Dramma speak them.'

These are his own Words, and his Judgment of these three Great Men in particular; now take his Opinion of them all in general, which is as follows:[2] 'But Malice and Partiality set apart, let any Man who understands English read diligently the Works of *Shakespear* and *Fletcher*, and I dare undertake that he will find in every Page either some *Solecisme* in Speech or some notorious flaw in Sence.' In the next Page, speaking of their Sence and Language, he says: 'I dare almost challenge any Man to shew me a Page together which is correct in both. As for *Ben Johnson*, I am loath to name him, because he is a most judicious Author, yet he oftens falls into these Errors.' Speaking of their Wit, he gives it this Character:[3] 'I have always acknowledg'd the Wit of our Predecessors, with all the Veneration that becomes me; but I am sure their Wit was not that of Gentlemen; there was ever somewhat that was Ill-bred and Clownish in it, and which confest the Conversation of the Authors.' Speaking of the advantage which acrues to our Writing from Conversation, he says:[4] 'In the Age wherein those Poets liv'd there was less of

[1] Postscript, *p.* 146. [2] Ibid., *pag.* 143. [3] Ibid., *p.* 148. [4] Ibid.

Gallantry than in ours; neither did they keep the best Company of theirs. Their Fortune has been much like that of *Epicurus* in the Retirement of his Gardens,—to live almost unknown, and to be Celebrated after their Decease. I cannot find that any of them were Conversant in Courts, except *Ben Johnson*; and his *Genius* lay not so much that way as to make an Improvement by it.' He gives this Character of their Audiences:[1] 'They knew no better, and therefore were satisfied with what they brought. Those who call theirs *The Golden Age of Poetry* have only this Reason for it, that they were then content with Acorns, before they knew the use of Bread, or that Ἄλις δρυός was become a Proverb.'

These are Errors which Mr. *Dryden* has found out in the most Correct Dramatick Poets of the last Age, and says[2] in defence of our present Writers, That if they reach not some Excellencies of *Ben Johnson*, yet at least they are above that Meanness of Thought which he has tax'd, and which is so frequent in him.

After this he falls upon the Gentlemen of the last Age in a Character, which (as *Bayes* says) is sheer point and Satyr throughout;[3] for after having Droll'd upon them, calling them *Old Fellows, Grave Gentlemen*, &c., he summes up his Evidence, and sings an *Io Triumphe*, ascribing his Victory to the Gallantry and Civility of this Age, and to his own Knowledge of the Customs and Manners of it.

I must do Mr. *Dryden* this justice, to acquaint the World that here and there in this *Postscript* he intersperses some faint Praises of these Authors, and beggs the Reader's Pardon for accusing them,[4] 'Desiring him to consider that he lives in ⟨an⟩ Age where his least faults are severely censur'd, and that he has no way left to extenuate his failings, but by shewing as great in those whom he admires.'

[1] Ibid., *p.* 144. [2] Ibid., *p.* 148. [3] Ibid., *p.* 144. [4] Ibid., *p.* 149.

Whether this be a sufficient Excuse or no, I leave to the Criticks; but sure I am that this procedure seems exactly agreeable to the Character which an ingenious Person draws of a Malignant Wit,[1] 'Who conscious of his own Vices, and studious to conceal them, endeavours by Detraction to make it appear that others also of greater Estimation in the world are tainted with the same or greater; as Infamous Women generally excuse their personal Debaucheries by incriminating upon their whole Sex, callumniating the most Chast and Virtuous to palliate their own dishonour.'

But 'tis not the Poets only that Mr. *Dryden* attacks; for had I time, I could easily prove he has *Almanzor*-like fell foul upon almost all Religions, Parties, and Orders of Mankind; so that whilst he was *Apollo*'s Substitute, he has play'd as odd Tricks and been as Mad as his own Wild-Bull, which he turn'd loose in *Sierra Ronda*[2]:

Whilst Monarch-like he rang'd the listed Field,
Some toss'd, some gor'd, some trampling down he kill'd.

And as if, by being Laureat, he were as Infallible as St. *Peter*'s Successor, and had as large a Despotick Power as Pope *Stephanus* the Sixth to damn his Predecessors, he has assaulted with all the Bitterness imaginable not only the Church of *England*, but also ridicul'd the several Professions of the *Lutherans*, *Calvinists*, *Socinians*, *Presbyterians*, *Hugonots*, *Anabaptists*, *Independents*, *Quakers*, &c., tho' I must observe, by the way, that some people among the Perswasions here mention'd might justly have expected better usage from him on Account of old Acquaintance in the Year 1659. But this being at present Foreign to my Subject, I shall not after an Act of Oblivion revive forgotten Crimes, but go on with the Thing I have undertook, *to wit*, The Defence of the Poets of the last Age.

Were Mr. Dryden really as great a Scholar as he would

[1] Dr. *Charleton*'s Different Wits of Men, *p.* 120.
[2] Conquest of *Granada*, part I, Act i, Sc. 1.

have the World believe him to be, he would have call'd to mind that *Homer*, whom he professeth to imitate, had set him a better pattern of Gratitude, who mentions with Respect and Kindness his Master *Phemi(u)s*, *Mentor* of *Ithaca*, and even *Tychius*, the honest Leather-dresser. Had he follow'd *Virgil*, whom he would be thought to esteem, instead of Reproaches he had heap'd Panegyricks on the Ashes of his Illustrious Predecessors; and rather than have tax'd them with their Errors in such a rude manner, would have endeavour'd to fix them in the Temple of Fame, as he did *Musæus* and the Ancient Poets in *Elisium* amongst the Magnanimous Heroes and *Teucer*'s Off-spring, stiling them,[1]

——*Pii Vates & Phœbo digna locuti.*

Had he observ'd *Ovid's Elegy ad Invidos*,[2] he might have found that good humour'd Gentleman, not only commending his Predecessors, but even his Contemporaries. But it seems he has follow'd *Horace*, whom he boasts to have studied,[3] and whom he has imitated in his greatest Weakness, I mean his Ingratitude; if at least that excellent Wit could be guilty of a Crime so much below his Breeding, for the very suspicion of which *Scaliger* (who, like Mr. *Dryden*, seldome spares any man) has term'd him Barbarous[4]: *Ingratus* Horatius, *atque animo barbaro atque servili, qui ne à Mecenate quidem abstinere potuit: siquidem quod aiunt, verum est*, Malthinum *ab eo appellatum, cujus demissas notaret tunicas*.[5] Mr. *Dryden* having imitated the same Fact, certainly he deserves the same punishment; and if we may not with *Scaliger* call him Barbarous, yet all ingenious Men that know how he has dealt with *Shakespear* will count him ungrateful, who by furbishing up an Old Play, witness *The Tempest* and *Troilus and Cressida*, has got more on the third Day than its probable ever

[1] *Æneid*, lib. 6. [2] *Amorum* l. 1, El. 15.
[3] Pref. *Relig. Laici*, last Paragraph. [4] *Poet.* L. 3, C. 97.
[5] *Malthinus* tunicis demissis ambulat: *Satyrar.* L. 1, Sat. 2.

Horace receiv'd from his Patron for any One Poem in all his Life. The like Debt he stands engag'd for to the *French* for several of the Plays he has publisht; which if they exceed Mr. *Shakespear* in Oeconomy and Contrivance, 'tis that Mr. *Dryden*'s Plays owe their Advantage to his skill in the French Tongue or to the Age, rather than his own Conduct or Performances.

Honest *Shakespear* was not in those days acquainted with those great Wits, *Scudery, Calpranede, Scarron, Corneille,* &c. He was as much a Stranger to French as Latine (in which, if we believe *Ben Johnson,* he was a very small Proficient); and yet an humble Story of *Dorastus* and *Fawnia* serv'd him for *A Winter's Tale,* as well as *The Grand Cyrus* or *The Captive Queen* could furnish out a Laureat for a *Conquest of Granada. Shakespear's Measure for Measure,* however despis'd by Mr. *Dryden,* with his *Much Ado about Nothing,* were believ'd by Sr. *William Davenant* (who, I presume, had as much judgment as *Sir Positive At-all*[1]) to have Wit enough in them to make one good Play.

To conclude, if Mr. *Shakespear*'s Plots are more irregular than those of Mr. *Dryden*'s (which by some will not be allow'd), 'tis because he never read *Aristotle* or *Rapin*; and I think *Tasso*'s Arguments to *Apollo* in defence of his *Gierusalemme Liberata* may be pleaded in our Author's behalf:[2] *Che solo havea ubbidito al talento che gli havea dato la Natura & all' inspiratione della sua serenissima* Calliope; *che per ciò li pareva di compitamente haver sodisfatto a gli obblighi tutti della Poetica, nella quale sua Maestà non havendo prescritto legge alcuna, non sapea veder con quai autorità* Aristotile *havesse pubblicato le Regole di essa; e ch' egli non mai havendo udito dire che in* Parnasso *si desse*

[1] See *Sullen Lovers,* p. 5.

[2] *I Ragguagli di Parnasso di Boccalini,* Ragg. 28. Or *Boccalini's* Advertisements from *Parnassus,* Advertis. 28.

*altro Signore che sua Maestà e le sue Serenissime Dive, il suo Peccato di non havere ubbidito a' commandamenti d'*Aristotile *era proceduto da mera ignoranza, non da malitia alcuna.* The Sence of which is thus: That he had only observ'd the Talent which Nature had given him, and which his *Calliope* had inspired into him: Wherein he thought he had fulfill'd all the duties of Poetry, and that his Majesty having prescrib'd no Laws thereunto, he knew not with what Authority *Aristotle* had published any Rules to be observed in it; and that he never having heard that there was any other Lord in *Parnassus* but his Majesty, his fault in not having observ'd *Aristotle*'s Rules was an Error of Ignorance, and not of any Malice.

As to Mr. *Fletcher*, should we grant that he understood not the *Decorum* of the Stage (as Mr. *Dryden*, and Mr. *Flecknoe* before him in his Discourse on the English Stage, observe), his Errors on that account are more pardonable than those of the former, who pretends so well to know it, and yet has offended against some of its most obvious and established Rules. Witness *Porphirius*[1] his attempt to kill the Emperor whose Subject he was, and who offer'd to adopt him his Son and give him his Daughter in Marriage; *Philocles*[2] joining with Prince *Lisimantes* in taking the Queen Prisoner, who rais'd him to be her chief Favourite.[3] If to wound a Woman be an Indecency and contrary to the Character of Manhood, of which he accuses *Philaster*[4] and *Perigot*,[5] than Mr. *Dryden* has equally offended with Mr. *Fletcher*, since he makes *Abdelmelech* kill *Lyndaraxa*.[6] If it be contrary to the *Decorum* of the Stage for *Demetrius* and *Leontius* to stay in the midst of a routed Army to hear the cold Mirth of *The Humourous Lieutenant*,[7] 'tis certainly no less, to stay the Queen and her Court

[1] Tyranick Love. [2] Maiden Queen. [3] Postscript, pag. 144.
[4] Philaster. [5] Faithful Shepherdess.
[6] Conquest of *Granada*, II. Part. [7] Postscript, *p.* 144.

to hear the cold Mirth of *Celadon* and *Florimel* about their Marriage Covenants whilst the main Action is depending.[1] If Mr. *Fletcher* be tax'd by Mr. *Dryden*[2] for introducing *Demetrius* with a Pistol in his Hand (in the Humourous Lieutenant) in the next Age to *Alexander* the Great, I think Mr. *Dryden* committed as great a Blunder in his *Zambra Dance*,[3] where he brought in the *Mahometans* bowing to the Image of *Jupiter*. I could give you several other Instances, but these are enough to shew that Mr. *Dryden* is no more Infallible than his Predecessors.

As to his failing in the two last Acts,—a fault *Cicero* sometimes alludes to, and blames in an Idle Poet,[4]—its more to be imputed to his Laziness than his want of Judgment. I have either read or been inform'd (I know not well whether) that 'twas generally Mr. *Fletcher*'s practice, after he had finish'd Three Acts of a Play, to shew them to the Actors, and when they had agreed on Terms, he huddled up the two last without that care that behoov'd him, which gave opportunity to such Friends as Mr. *Dryden* to traduce him. This, tho' no just excuse, yet I believe was known to Mr. *Dryden* before, and therefore ought not as an act of Ignorance to have been urg'd so fiercely against him.

As to his Plots being borrow'd, 'tis what is allowed by *Scaliger* and others, and what has been practic'd by Mr. *Dryden* more than by any Poet that I know; so that *He* of all Men living had no Reason to throw the first Stone at him. But Mr. *Dryden* is of the nature of those Satyrists describ'd by *Scaliger*[5]: *Commune est omnibus profiteri sese omnium pene hostem; paucissimorum parcissimum laudato-*

[1] Maiden Queen. [2] Postscript, *Ibid.*
[3] Conquest of *Granada*, part I.
[4] *Tull.* lib. de *Senect.* (non procul ab initio): a quâ (sc. Naturâ) non verisimile est, cum ceteræ partes ætatis bene descriptæ sint, extremum actum, tanquam ab inerti Poetâ, esse neglectum.
[5] *Poet.* L. 3, C. 97.

rem: Se quoque vulnerare ut alios interficere liceat; nam ne amicis quidem parcunt.

To come lastly to *Ben Johnson*, who, as Mr. *Dryden* affirms,[1] has borrow'd more from the Ancients than any, I crave leave to say in his behalf that our late *Laureat* has far out-done him in Thefts, proportionable to his Writings; and therefore he is guilty of the highest Arrogance, to accuse another of a Crime for which he is most of all men liable to be arraign'd.[2]

Quis tulerit Gracchos de seditione querentes?

I must further alledge that Mr. *Johnson*, in borrowing from the Ancients, has only follow'd the Pattern of the great Men of former Ages, *Homer, Virgil, Ovid, Horace, Plautus, Terence, Seneca*, &c., all which have imitated the Example of the industrious Bee, which sucks Honey from all sorts of Flowers and lays it up in a general Repository. 'Twould be *actum agere* to repeat what is known to all Learned Men, that there was an Illiad written before that of *Homer*, which *Aristotle* mentions, and from which, by *Suidas*, *Ælian*, and others, *Homer* is supposed to have borrow'd his Design. *Virgil* copied from *Hesiod, Homer, Pisander, Euripides, Theocritus, Aratus, Ennius, Pacuvius, Lucretius*, and others, as may be seen in *Macrobius* and *Fulvio Ursini*, which last Author has writ a particular Treatise of his Thefts. Notwithstanding, he accounted it no Diminution to his Worth, but rather gloried in his Imitation, for when some snarling Criticks had accus'd him for having borrow'd his Design from *Homer*, he reply'd: 'Tis the Act of an *Hero* to wrest *Hercules*'s Club out of his Hand. Besides, he not only acknowledges in particular his making use of *Hesiod*,[3]

Ascræumque cano Romana per oppida carmen,

[1] Pref. *Mock Astrol.* [2] *Juv.* Sat. 2. [3] *Geor.* L. 2.

But extreamly glories in his being the first Latine Poet that had treated on Country Affairs:

——*Juvat ire jugis, qua nulla priorum*
Castaliam molli diducitur orbita clivo.

Ovid not only took the Design of his *Metamorphosis* from the forementiond *Parthenius*, but even *Horace* himself, notwithstanding his Hypercritical Sentence against such as undertook that Province and did not well acquit themselves, stiling them,[1]

Imitatorum stultum pecus,

Yet, I say, He himself not only imitated *Lucilius* in his Satyrs, and followed *Aristotle* in his Epistle *De Arte Poetica*, but also translated *Verbatim* those Fragments of the Greeks which in some Editions are to be found at the End of *Pindar*'s Works, and inserted them in his first Book of *Odes*, as might be easily made appear, were it not too long a Discursion.

For this Reason I shall only speak succinctly of the Latine Dramatick Poets, most of which were Imitators at least, if not wholly beholding to the Greek Poets for their Productions. Thus *Seneca* in his Tragedies imitated *Euripides* and *Æschylus*; *Terence* borrow'd from *Menander*, and in his Prologue to *Andria* quotes *Nævius, Plautus*, and *Ennius* for his Authority. I could enumerate more Instances, but these are sufficient Precedents to excuse Mr. *Johnson.*

Permit me to say farther in his behalf, That if, in imitation of these illustrious Examples and Models of Antiquity, he has borrow'd from them, as they from each other, yet that he attempted, and, some think, happily succeeded in his Endeavours of Surpassing them; insomuch that a certain Person of Quality[2] makes a Question, 'Whether any of

[1] *Epist.* L. 1, Ep. 19.
[2] Poems and Essays, By Mr. *Edw. Howard.* p. 24.

the Wit of the Latine Poets be more Terse and Eloquent in their Tongue than this Great and Learned Poet appears in ours.'

Whether Mr. *Dryden*, who has likewise succeeded to admiration in this way, or Mr. *Johnson* have most improv'd and best advanc'd what they have borrow'd from the Ancients, I shall leave to the decision of the abler Criticks; only this I must say in behalf of the later, that he has no ways endeavour'd to conceal what he has borrow'd, as the former has generally done. Nay, in his Play called *Sejanus* he has printed in the Margent throughout the places from whence he borrow'd; the same he has practic'd in several of his Masques (as the Reader may find in his Works),—a Pattern which Mr. *Dryden* would have done well to have copied, and had thereby sav'd me the trouble of the following Annotations.

There is this difference between the Proceedings of these Poets, that Mr. *Johnson* has by Mr. *Dryden*'s Confession[1] *Design'd his Plots himself*, whereas I know not any One Play whose Plot may be said to be the Product of Mr. *Dryden*'s own Brain. When Mr. *Johnson* borrow'd, 'twas from the Treasury of the Ancients, which is so far from any diminution of his Worth, that I think it is to his Honor; at least-wise I am sure he is justified by his Son, *Carthwright*, in the following Lines:[2]

> *What tho' thy searching Muse did rake the dust*
> *Of Time, & purge old Mettals from their Rust,*
> *Is it no Labour, no Art, think they, to*
> *Snatch Shipwracks from the Deep, as Divers do,*
> *And rescue Jewels from the covetous Sand,*
> *Making the Seas hid Wealth adorn the Land?*
> *What tho' thy culling Muse did rob the store*
> *Of Greek and Latine Gardens, to bring o're*
> *Plants to thy Native Soil, their Virtue were*
> *Improv'd far more by being planted here:*

[1] Pref. *Mock Astrol.* [2] Carthwright's *Poems*, p. 315.

If thy Still to their Essence doth refine
So many Drugs, is not the Water thine?
Thefts thus become just Works; they and their Grace
Are wholly thine; thus doth the Stamp and Face
Make that the King's that's ravish'd from the Mine;
In others then 'tis Oar, in thee 'tis Coin.

On the contrary, tho' Mr. *Dryden* has likewise borrow'd from the Greek and Latine Poets, as *Sophocles, Virgil, Horace, Seneca* &c., which I purposely omit to tax him with, as thinking what he has taken to be lawful prize, yet I cannot but observe withal, that he has plunder'd the chief *Italian, Spanish,* and *French* Wits for Forage, notwithstanding his pretended contempt of them; and not only so, but even his own Countrymen have been forc'd to pay him tribute, or to say better, have not been exempt from being Pillag'd. This I shall sufficiently make out in the Examen of his Plays; in the mean time, give me leave to say a word or two in Defence of Mr. *Johnson*'s way of Wit, which Mr. *Dryden* calls *Clenches.*

There have been few great Poets which have not propos'd some Eminent Author for their Pattern: Examples of this would be needless and endless. Mr. *Johnson* propos'd *Plautus* for his Model, and not only borrow'd from him, but imitated his way of Wit in English. There are none who have read him but are acquainted with his way of playing with Words. I will give one Example for all, which the Reader may find in the very entrance of his Works, I mean the Prologue to *Amphitruo*:

Justam rem & facilem ⟨esse⟩ oratum à vobis volo:
Nam juste ab justis justus sum Orator datus.
Nam injusta ab justis impetrare non decet:
Justa autem ab injustis petere insipientia'st.

Nor might this be the sole Reason for Mr. *Johnson*'s Imitation, for possibly 'twas his Compliance with the Age that induc'd him to this way of writing, it being then, as

Mr. *Dryden* observes,[1] the Mode of Wit, the Vice of the Age, and not *Ben Johnson*'s; and besides Mr. *Dryden*'s taxing Sir *Philip Sidney* for playing with his Words, I may add that I find it practis'd by several Dramatick Poets who were Mr. *Johnson*'s Cotemporaries: and notwithstanding the advantage which this Age claims over the last, we find Mr. *Dryden* himself as well as Mr. *Johnson*, not only given to Clinches, but sometimes a *Carwichet*, a *Quarter-quibble* or a bare *Pun* serves his turn as well as his Friend *Bur* in his *Wild Gallant*; and therefore he might have spar'd this Reflection, if he had given himself the liberty of Thinking.

As to his Reflections on this Triumvirate in general, I might easily prove that his Improprieties in Grammar are equal to theirs, and that He himself has been guilty of Solecisms in Speech and Flaws in Sence as well as *Shakespear*, *Fletcher*, and *Johnson*; but this would be to wast Paper and Time; and besides, I consider that *Apollos* Laws, like those of our own Nation, allow no Man to be try'd twice for the same Crime; and Mr. *Dryden* having already been arraign'd before the Wits upon the Evidence of the *Rota*, and found Guilty by Mr. *Clifford*, the Foreman of the Jury, I shall suppress my further Evidence, till I am serv'd with a *Subpœna* by him to appear before that Court, or have an Action clapp'd upon me by his Proctor, as guilty of a *Scandalum Archi-Poetæ*, and then I shall readily give in my Depositions.

For these and the like Reasons, I shall at present pass by his dis-obliging Reflections on several of his Patrons as well as the Poets his Cotemporaries, his little Arts to set up himself and decry others, his dexterity in altering other Mens Thoughts so as to make them pass for his own, his Tautologies, his Petty-Larcenies, which, notwithstanding his stiling of himself *Saturnine*, shew him sufficiently *Mercurial*, at least if Plagiaries may be accounted under the Govern-

[1] Postscript to *Granada*, p. 148.

ment of that Planet. In fine (if Old *Moody* will allow me to borrow that word) he resembles Vulgar Painters, who can tolerably copy after a good Original, but either have not judgment or will not take the pains themselves to design any thing of value. This will easily appear in the following Account of his Plays, of which I come now to speak. *Viz.*

Albion and *Albanius*, an Opera perform'd at the Queen's Theatre in *Dorset-Garden*, and printed in Folio, *Lond.* 1685. 'The Subject of it (as the Author says) is wholly Allegorical; and the Allegory it self so very obvious, that it will no sooner be read than understood.' I need not therefore take the pains to acquaint my Reader that by the Man on the Pedestal, who is drawn with a long, lean, pale Face, with Fiends Wings, and Snakes twisted round his Body, and incompast by several Phanatical Rebellious Heads who suck Poyson from him, which runs out of a Tap in his Side, is meant the late Lord *Shaftsbury* and his Adherents. I shall not pretend to pass my censure whether he deserv'd this usage from our Author or no, but leave it to the judgments of Statesmen and Polititians. How well our Author has drawn his other Characters, I shall leave to the decision of the Criticks, as also whether Monsieur *Grabut* or our Poet deserves the preference, or either of them merit those Applauses which Mr. *Dryden* in both their Names challenges as their due, since I find an Author of a different Opinion, who thus describes them:

> Grabut, *his Yoke-mate, ne're shall be forgot,*
> *Whom th' God of Tunes upon a Muse begot.*
> Bays *on a double score to him belongs,*
> *As well for* writing *as for* setting *Songs.*
> *For some have sworn* (*th' Intrigue so od is laid*)
> *That* Bayes *and He mistook each others Trade:*
> Grabut *the Lines, and He the Musick made.*

All for Love, or *The World well Lost*, a Tragedy acted at the Theatre Royal, and written in imitation of *Shakespear*'s

stile, printed in quarto, *Lond.* 1678, and dedicated to the Right Honourable *Thomas* Earl of *Danby*. That our Author has nearly imitated *Shakespear* is evident by the following Instance. In the Comedy call'd *Much Ado about Nothing*[1] the Bastard accuses *Hero* of Disloyalty before the Prince and *Claudio* her Lover, who, as surpris'd at the News, asks, Who! *Hero*? *Bast.* Even she, *Leonato's Hero*, your *Hero*, every Mans *Hero*. In this Play,[2] on the like occasion, where *Ventidius* accuses *Cleopatra*, *Antony* says, Not *Cleopatra*! *Ven.* Even she, my Lord! *Ant.* My *Cleopatra*? *Ven.* Your *Cleopatra*, *Dollabella's Cleopatra*, Every Mans *Cleopatra*. *Ex homine hunc natum dicas.* Our Author with justice prefers the Scene betwixt *Antonius* and *Ventidius*, in the first Act, to any thing he has written in that kind; but as to his defence of the Scene between *Octavia* and *Cleopatra*, in the end of the third Act, there are some Criticks who are not yet satisfied that it is agreeable to the Rules of Decency and *Decorum* to make Persons of their Character demean themselves contrary to the Modesty of their Sex. For the Plot see *Plutarch* in *Vit. M. Ant.*, *Suetonius* in *Aug.*, *Dion Cassius*, Lib. 48, 51, *Orosius*, Lib. 6, Cap. 7, *Florus*, L. 4, C. 11, *Appian de Bellis Civilibus*, L. 5.

Amboyna, a Tragedy acted at the Theatre Royal, printed in quarto, *Lond.* 1673, and dedicated to the Right Honourable the Lord *Clifford* of *Chudleigh*. The Plot of this Play is founded chiefly on History, being an Account of the Cruelty of the *Dutch* to our Country-Men in *Amboyna*, *An. Dom.* 1618. There was a Book publisht by the *East-India* Company, which I never saw, but I have read a Relation extracted from thence by Mr. *Purchas*, and printed in his *Pilgrimage*, Vol. II, L. 10, Ch. 16. There are several other Authors that have mention'd this Story, as *Sanderson*'s History of King *James*, pag. 577, *Stubb*'s Relation of the

[1] Act 3, p. 101. [2] Act 4, p. 54.

Dutch Cruelties to the *English* at *Amboyna*, printed in quarto, *Lond.* 1632, *Wanley*'s History of *Man*, Lib. 4, Ch. 10, Ex. 1. The Plot of the Rape of *Isabinda* by *Harman* Junior is founded on a Novel in *Cynthio Gyraldi*, *Deca* 5ª, *Nov.* 10.

Assignation, or *Love in a Nunnery*, a Comedy acted at the Theatre Royal, printed in quarto, *Lond.* 1678, and dedicated to his most Honour'd Friend, Sir *Charles Sidley*, Baronet. This Play was Damn'd on the Stage, or as the Author phrases it,[1] *it succeeded-ill in the Representation.* I shall not pretend to determine any more than the Author, 'Whether the fault was in the Play it self, or in the lameness of the Action, or in the number of its Enemies, who came resolv'd to damn it for the Title;' but this I know, that his Reflections on Mr. *Ravencrofts* Play, call'd *Mamamouchi* provok'd him to a retort in another Prologue[2] to a new Play of his acted the Vacation following, part of which, as relating to this Play, I shall transcribe.

An Author *did to please you let his Wit run*
Of late much on a Serving-man *and* Cittern,
And yet you would not like the Serenade,
Nay, and you damn'd his Nuns *in* Masquerade.
You did his Spanish *Sing-song too abhor,*
Ah! que locura con tanto rigor.
In fine, the whole by you so much was blam'd,
To act their parts the Players *were asham'd;*
Ah! how severe your Malice was that Day,
To damn at once the Poet and his Play.
But why was your Rage just at that time shown,
When what the Poet *writ was all his own?*
Till then he borrow'd from Romance, and did translate,
And those Plays found a more indulgent Fate.

But in this Mr. *Ravencroft* is very much deceiv'd, for most of the Characters as well as the Incidents are borrow'd from *French* Romances, as, for instance, The

[1] Epistle Dedicatory. [2] *Careless Lovers.*

Characters of the Duke of *Mantua*, Prince *Frederick*, and *Lucretia* are borrow'd from *The Annals of Love*, 8°, in the Story of *Constance* the fair Nun, *pag.* 81; but as to the Scene of the *Petticoat* and *Belly Ake*,[1] so much commended by Mr. *Bayes*[2], I believe 'twas Mr. *Dryden*'s own Contrivance. The Characters of *Aurelian*, *Camillo*, *Laura*, and *Violetta* are taken from *Scarron*'s *Comical Romance*, in the History of *Destiny* and Madam *Star*: See *Ch.* 13, *pag.* 43. The Humour of *Benito*'s affecting Musick to the prejudice of his Carcass[3] is borrow'd from *Quinault*'s Character of *Jodolet*, in the begining of his *La Comedie sans Comedie*. The passage of *Frontona*'s throwing water upon *Laura* and *Violetta*[4] is taken from *Les Contes de M. de la Fontaine, premiere partie, Nov.* 11, *p.* 74. There are other French Authors that have handled the same Story, as *Les Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles*, *La Damoiselle à Cœur ouvert*, &c.

Aureng-zebe, a Tragedy acted at the Theatre Royal, printed in quarto, *Lond.* 1676, and dedicated to the Right Honourable *John* Earl of *Mulgrave*. The Plot of this Play is related at large in *Tavernier*'s *Voyages into the Indies*, Vol. 1. Part 2, Ch. 2. Our Author is not wholly free from Thefts in this Play, and those who have ever read *Seneca*'s *Hippolitus* will allow that *Aureng-zebe* has some resemblance with his Character, and that *Nourmahal* is in part copied from *Phædra*, which will the better appear, if the Reader will compare the following Lines:[5]

Hip. ——*Thesei vultus amo*
Illos priores, quos tulit quondam puer;
Cum prima puras barba signaret genas.

Aur.[6] I am not chang'd, I love my Husband still,
But Love him as he was when youthful Grace
And the first bloom began to shade his Face.

[1] Act 4, Sc. 1. [2] *Rehearsal*, Act 3, p. 33. [3] Act 1, Sc. 1.
[4] Act. 3, p. 22. [5] *Hippolitus*, Act 2, Sc. 3.
[6] *Aureng-zebe*, Act 4, Sc. 1.

Hip. ——*Magne regnator Deûm,*
Tam lentus audis scelera? tam lentus vides?
Ecquando Sæva fulmen emittes manu,
Si nunc serenum est?
——*Me velox cremet*
Transactus ignis. Sum nocens; merui mori;
Placui novercæ.

Aur. Heavens, can you this without just vengeance hear?
When will you Thunder, if it now be clear?
Yet Her alone let not your Thunder seize;
I too deserve to dye, because I please.

I could cite other passages in this Play borrow'd from *Seneca*, but this is enough to convict our Author of borrowing from the Latine Poets; now give me leave to give you one Instance likewise of his borrowing from Mr. *Milton*'s *Sampson Agonistes*:[1]

Dal. I see thou art implacable, more deaf
To Prayers than winds and seas; yet winds to seas
Are reconcil'd at length, and sea to shore:
Thy anger unappeasable still rages,
Eternal Tempest never to be calm'd.

Emp.[2] *Unmov'd she stood, & deaf to all my prayers,*
As Seas and Winds to sinking Mariners;
But Seas grow calm, and Winds are reconcil'd;
Her Tyrant Beauty never grows more mild.

There are many other Hints from this Poem that are inserted in this Play by Mr. *Dryden*, and which I should not have laid to his Charge had he not accus'd *Ben Johnson* of the same Crime.

Conquest of Granada by the *Spaniards*, in two Parts, acted at the Theatre-Royal, printed in quarto, *Lond.* 1678,[3] and dedicated to his Royal Highness the Duke. These Plays I have seen acted with great Applause, which so pufft up our Author with vanity, that he could not refrain from abusing his Predecessors, not only in the Postscript

[1] *Sampson Agonistes*, p. 108. [2] *Aur.* p. 8. [3] Third Edit.

already mention'd, but even in a detracting Epilogue to the second Part, which I shall leave to the Readers perusal. I have already hinted that not only the *Episodes* and main Plot, but even the Characters are all borrow'd from *French* and *Spanish* Romances, as *Almahide, Grand Cyrus, Ibrahim,* and *Gusman*; so that Mr. *Dryden* may be said to have made a Rod for himself in the following lines:[1]

> *And may those drudges of the Stage, whose Fate*
> *Is damn'd dull Farce more dully to Translate,*
> *Fall under that Excuse the State thinks fit*
> *To set on all* French *Wares, whose worst is Wit.*
> French *Farce worn out at home is sent abroad;*
> *And, patcht up here, is made our English Mode.*

How much Mr. *Dryden* has borrow'd from the *French* in this Play cannot be comprehended in the Compass to which I confine my self, and therefore I shall only mention some of the most remarkable Passages which are stollen. I am therefore in the first place to begin with the Persons represented: The Character of *Almanzor* is chiefly taken from *Ponce de Leon* in *Almahide,* from *Ozmin* in *Gusman,* and *Artaban* in *Cleopatra.* His other Characters of *Boabdelin, Almahide, Ferdinand* and *Isabella,* Duke of *Arcos, Ozmin, Hamet, Gomel,* &c., are taken from *Almahide.* The Characters of *Ozmin* and *Benzaida* are borrow'd from *Ibrahim,* in the Story of *Ozmin* and *Alibech*; of *Abdalla, Abdelmelech,* and *Lyndaraxa* are copied from Prince *Ariantes, Agathirsis,* and *Elibesis;* see *Grand Cyrus,* Part IX. Book I.

I am now to give some Instances that may make good my Assertion, That Mr. *Dryden* has borrow'd most of his Thoughts as well as his Characters from those Authors above mention'd, tho' he has new cloath'd them in Rime. In the beginning of the First Act he has borrow'd the Description of his *Bull-feast* from *Guzman*'s *Juego de*

[1] Prologue, First part.

Toros & Cannas: See the Story of *Ozmin* and *Daraxa*, part 1. pag. 82 and 85. The Description of the Factions, *pag.* 4, is borrow'd from *Almahide*, p. 1. The next four Lines spoken by the King is taken from Prince *Mussa*'s advice in *Almahide*, p. 6. The King's Speech in going between the Factions, *pag.* 5, is borrow'd from *Almahide*, Part 3, Book 3, p. 63. The Description of the Quarrel between *Tarifa* and *Ozmin* is founded on *Abindarrays* his Speech in *Alm.* p. 2. The Rise of the Families, *p.* 6, from the same. *Almanzor*'s killing *Gomel*, from *Alm.* p. 64. His quelling the Factions, from *Alm.* p. 64, 65. In the Second Act, *Almanzor*'s Victory and his taking the Duke of *Arcos* prisoner, *p.* 12, is copied from *Almahide*, p. 65. The Scene between *Abdalla* and *Lyndaraxa*, p. 13, is stollen from *Alm.* p. 62, and from the Story of *Elibesis* in *Cyrus*, Part 9, Book 1, p. 20. *Zulema*'s Plea for *Abdalla*'s right to the Crown, *p.* 17, is copied from *Alm.* p. 62. His tempting him to Rebellion, from *Cyrus* in the place above-mention'd. In the Third Act, *Almanzor*'s going over to *Abdalla*, on the Kings refusal to grant the Duke of *Arcos* his Liberty, *pag.* 18, is taken from *Alm.* p. 55, *&c.* The Alarm after the *Zambra* Dance, from the same page. The first meeting of *Almanzor* and *Almahide*, p. 27, from *Alm.* p. 69. Of *Abdalla* and *Almanzor*, p. 30, from *Alm.* p. 71. The Controversy between *Almanzor* and *Zulema*, p. 31, from the same Column. In the Fourth Act, *Almanzor*'s going over to *Boabdelin*'s Party, *p.* 34, is taken from *Alm.* p. 72. *Abdelmelech* his coming to visit *Lyndaraxa* in Disguise, p. 35, is stollen from the former Story of *Elibesis* in *Cyrus*, p. 25, *&c.* *Abdalla* visiting her, being Royally attended with Guards, *p.* 39, from the same, p. 67. *Almanzor*'s freeing *Almahide* from *Abdalla*'s Captivity, *p.* 45, is copied from *Alm.* p. 73. The beginning of the Fifth Act, *viz.* The Scene between *Abdalla* and *Lyndaraxa*, under the Walls of the *Albayzin*, immediately

after his Defeat, *p.* 48, is stollen from *Cyrus* in the Story aforesaid, *p.* 61. His flying to the Christians, *p.* 50, from *Alm.* p. 72. *Ozmin* and *Benzaida*'s flight, *p.* 62, from *Ibrahim*, p. 8.

I might proceed through the Second Part, did I not fear the Reader to be already as tir'd as my self. I shall therefore only acquaint him that most of that Play is borrow'd as well as the former: So that, had our Author stollen from others in none of his Labours, yet these Plays alone argue him guilty of the highest Confidence, that durst presume to arraign the Ancient English Poets as Plagiaries, in a Postscript to two Plays whose Foundation and Language are in a great measure stollen from the Beginning to the End. I would therefore desire Mr. *Dryden* henceforth to ponder upon the following Epigram, which seems to give him better Advice.[1]

Cum fueris Censor, primum te crimine purga,
Nec tua te damnent facta nefanda reum.
Ne tua contemnas, aliena negotia curans;
An tibi te quisquam junctior esse potest?

There are several Authors that have given an Account of this famous Action, as *Mariana*, L. 25, C. 18, *Mayerne Turquet*, L. 23, *Thuanus*, L. 48, *Guicciardine*, L. 12, *Luc. Marinæus Sic.*, L. 20, *Car. Verardus*, *Domingo Baltanas*, &c.

Don Sebastian, King of *Portugal*, a Tragedy acted at the Theatre-Royal, printed in quarto, *Lond.* 1690, and dedicated to the Right Honourable *Philip* Earl of *Leicester*. This Play is accounted by several One of the best of Mr. *Dryden*'s, and was, as I have heard, acted with great Applause. The Foundation of it is built upon a French Novel call'd *Don Sebastian*. How far our Author has followed the *French-man*, I leave to the Readers of both to judge. Only give me leave to take notice of that

[1] *Oweni* Disticha Ethica & Politica, *Ep.* 31, *p.* 119.

passage in his Epistle to this Play, where he endeavours to clear himself from the charge of Plagiarie. He says: 'The Ancients were never accus'd of being Plagiaries for building their Tragedies on known Fables.' To prove this assertion he brings several Instances: 'Thus (says he) *Augustus Cæsar* wrote an *Ajax*, which was not less his own because *Euripides* had written a Play before him on that Subject. Thus of late years *Corneille* writ an *Oedipus* after *Sophocles*; and I have design'd one after him which I wrote with Mr. *Lee*, yet neither the *French* Poet stole from the *Greek*, nor we from the *French-man*. 'Tis the Contrivance, the new turn, and new Characters which alter the Property and make it ours.'

I have not that I know of any where accus'd the Poets in general, or Mr. *Dryden* in particular, for borrowing their Plots, knowing that it is allow'd by *Scaliger*, *M. Hedelin*, and other Writers. 'Tis true I have shew'd whether they were founded on History or Romance, and cited the Authors that treat on the Subject of each Dramma, that the Reader, by comparing them, might be able to judge the better of the Poets abilities and his skill in Scenical Performances. But tho' the Poet be allow'd to borrow his Foundation from other Writers, I presume the Language ought to be his own; and when at any time we find a Poet translating whole Scenes from others Writings, I hope we may without offence call him a Plagiary; which if granted, I may accuse Mr. *Dryden* of Theft, notwithstanding this Defence, and inform the Reader that he equivocates in this Instance of *Oedipus*; for tho' he stole not from *Corneille* in that Play, yet he has borrow'd very much from the *Oedipus Tyrannus* of *Sophocles*, as likewise from that of *Seneca*.

For the Plot read the *French* Novel call'd *Don Sebastian Roy de Portugal*, translated into English. *Vasconcellos* his *Anacephalæoses, sive summa Capita Actorum Regum*

Lusitaniæ, *Anacæph.* 20. See besides other Writers of the Affairs of *Portugal* about 1578, in which year *Sebastian* was kill'd.

Duke of Guise, a Tragedy acted by Their Majesties Servants, written by Mr. *Dryden* and Mr. *Lee*, printed in quarto, *Lond.* 1683, and dedicated to the Right Honourable *Laurence* Earl of *Rochester*. This Play found several Enemies at its first appearance on the Stage, the Nation at that time being in a ferment about the Succession, which occasion'd several Pamphlets, *pro* and *con*, to be publisht. The main Plot is borrow'd from *Davila*, *Mezeray*, and other Writers of the Affairs of *Charles* the Ninth, as *P. Mathieu*, *Memoires de Castelnau*. See besides *Thuanus*, L. 93. The Story of *Malicorn* the Conjurer may be read in *Rosset*'s *Histoires Tragiques* (in *la Vie de Canope*), 8°, *p.* 449.

Evening's Love, or *The Mock Astrologer*, a Comedy acted at the Theatre-Royal by His Majesties Servants, printed in quarto, *Lond.* 1671, and dedicated to his Grace *William* Duke of *Newcastle*. This Play is in a manner wholly stollen from the *French*, being patcht up from *Corneille*'s *Le Feint Astrologue*, *Molliere*'s *Depit amoureux* and his *Les Precieuses Ridicules*, and *Quinault*'s *L'Amant Indiscret*,— not to mention little Hints borrow'd from *Shakespear*, *Petronius Arbiter*, &c. The main Plot of this Play is built on that of *Corneille*'s, or rather *Calderon*'s Play call'd *El Astrologo fingido*, which Story is likewise copied by *M. Scudery* in his Romance call'd *Ibrahim*, or the Illustrious *Bassa*, in the Story of the *French* Marquess. *Aurelia*'s affectation in her Speech, *p.* 31, is borrow'd from *Molliere*'s *Les Precieuses Ridicules*. The Scene between *Alonzo* and *Lopez*, p. 39, is translated from *Molliere*'s *Depit amoureux*, Act 2, Sc. 6. *Camilla*'s begging a new Gown of *Don Melchor*, *p.* 61, from the same, Act 1, Sc. 2. The Love Quarrel between *Wild-blood* and *Jacinta*, *Mascal*

and *Beatrix*, Act 4, Sc. the last, is copied from the same Play, Act 4, Sc. 3, and 4. The Scene of *Wild-blood*, *Jacinta*, &c., being discover'd by *Aurelia*'s falling into *Alonzo*'s Arms, *p.* 73, *&c.*, is borrow'd from *Quinault*'s *L'Amant Indiscret*, Act 5, Sc. 4.

Kind Keeper, or *Mr. Limberham*, a Comedy acted at the Duke's Theatre, by his Royal Highness's Servants; printed in quarto, *Lond.* 1680, and dedicated to the Right Honourable *John* Lord *Vaughan*. In this Play, which I take to be the best Comedy of his, he so much expos'd the keeping part of the Town, that the Play was stopt when it had but thrice appear'd on the Stage; but the Author took a becoming Care that the things that offended on the Stage were either alter'd or omitted in the Press. One of our modern Writers, in a short *Satyr against Keeping*, concludes thus:[1]

> Dryden, *good Man, thought* Keepers *to reclaim,*
> *Writ a kind* Satyr, *call'd it* Limberham.
> *This all the Herd of* Letchers *straight alarms,*
> *From* Charing-Cross *to* Bow *was up in Arms;*
> *They damn'd the Play all at one fatal Blow,*
> *And broke the Glass that did their Picture show.*

In this Play he is not exempt from borrowing some Incidents from *French* and *Italian* Novels. Mrs. *Saintly*'s discovery of *Love-all* in the Chest, *Act* 1, is borrow'd from the Novels of *Cynthio Gyraldi*; see *prima parte, Deca* 3ª, *Nov.* 3. The same Story is in *The Fortunate, Deceiv'd, and Unfortunate Lovers*; see Nov. 7, *Deceiv'd Lovers*. Mrs. *Brainsicks* pricking and pinching him, Act 3, Sc. 2, is copied from the *Triumph of Love over Fortune*, a Novel writ by *M. S. Bremond*, or else from *Zelotide* of *M. de Païs*: but these are things not worthy to be urg'd against any One but Mr. *Dryden*, whose Critical Pen spares no Man.

[1] *Cleve's* Poems, *p.* 94.

Indian Emperor, or *The Conquest of* Mexico *by the Spaniards*, being the Sequel of the *Indian Queen*, printed in quarto, *Lond.* 1670, and dedicated to the Most Excellent and most Illustrious Princess *Anne* Dutchess of *Monmouth* and *Bucclugh*. This Play is writ in Heroick Verse, and has appear'd on the Stage with great Approbation, yet it is not wholly free from Plagiarie ; but since they are only Hints, and much improv'd, I shall not mention the Particulars. 'Tis sufficient for me to observe in general that he has borrow'd from *Plutarch*, *Seneca*, *Montagne*, *Fletcher*, &c. Mr. *Dryden*, in the Second Edition to this Play, prefixt a Piece intituled *A Defence of an Essay of Dramatick Poesy*, being an Answer to the Preface of *The Great Favourite*, or *The Duke of Lerma* ; but upon some considerations our Author was obliged to retract it. For the Plot of this Play, 'tis founded chiefly on History. See *Lopez de Gomara, Hist. General de las Incas & de* ⟨*la*⟩ *Conquista de Mexico. De Bry, Americæ* Pars 9, L. 7. *Ogleby*'s *America*, Chap. 3, Sect. 10. *Mariana de Reb. Hisp.* L. 26, Chap. 3. Four Letters printed in several Languages.

Marriage A-la-mode, a Comedy acted at the Theatre-Royal by their Majesties Servants ; printed in quarto, *Lond.* 1673, and dedicated to the Right Honourable the Earl of *Rochester*. This Play, tho' stil'd in the Title-page a Comedy, is rather a Tragi-Comedy, and consists of two different Actions, the one *Serious*, the other *Comick*, both borrow'd from two Stories which the Author has tackt together. The Serious Part is founded on the Story of *Sesostris* and *Timareta* in the *Grand Cyrus*, Part 9, Book 3 ; and the Characters of *Palamede* and *Rhodophil*, from the same Romance, Par. 6, B^{k} 1. See the History of *Timantes* and *Parthenia*. I might mention also the Story of *Nogaret* in *The Annals of Love*, from whence part of the Character of *Doralice* was possibly borrow'd ; and *Les*

Contes D'Ouville, partie premiere, p. 13, from whence the Fancy of *Melantha*'s making Court to her self in *Rhodophil*'s Name is taken ; but this is usual with our Poet.

Mistaken Husband, a Comedy acted by His Majesties Servants at the Theatre-Royal, and printed in quarto, *Lond.* 1675. This Play Mr. *Dryden* was not the Author of, tho' 'twas adopted by him as an Orphan which might well deserve the Charity of a Scene which he bestowed on it. It is of the nature of Farce, or as the *French* term it *Basse Comedie,* as Mr. *Bentley* the Bookseller has observed.[1] 'Tis writ on the Model of *Plautus*'s *Mœnechmi,* and I have read a Story somewhat like it in *L'Amant Oysif,* Tome 2, p. 297, *Nouvelle intitulée D. Martin.*

Oedipus, a Tragedy acted at his Royal Highness the Duke's Theatre, written by Mr. *Dryden* and Mr. *Lee,* printed in quarto, *Lond.* 1679. This Play is certainly one of the best Tragedies we have extant, the Authors having borrow'd many Ornaments not only from *Sophocles,* but also from *Seneca*; though in requital Mr. *Dryden* has been pleas'd to arraign the Memory of the later by taxing him[2] of 'Running after Philosophical Notions more proper for the Study than the Stage'. As for *Corneille,* he has scouted him for failing in the Character of his *Hero,* which he calls an Error in the first Concoction, tho' possibly 'twas so in him to fall upon two such Great Men without any provocation, and to whom he has been more than once oblig'd for beautiful Thoughts. As to the Plot, 'tis founded on the Tragedies of *Sophocles* and *Seneca.*

Rival Ladies, a Tragi-Comedy, acted at the Theatre-Royal, printed in quarto, *Lond.* 1679, and dedicated to the Right Honourable *Roger* Earl of *Orrery.* This Dedication is in the Nature of a Preface written in Defence of English Verse. The Authors Sentiments were afterwards controverted by Sr. *Robert Howard,* in the Preface to his

[1] Epistle to the Reader. [2] Preface.

Plays, to which Arguments Mr. *Dryden* reply'd towards the end of his Dramatick Essay. Sr. *Robert* made a Rejoynder when he publisht his Duke of *Lerma*, and Mr. *Dryden* answer'd him again in the Preface to his *Indian Emperour*, as I have already observ'd.

I beg leave of my Reader to make one Remark on this Preface, to Rectify the following mistake committed by our Author. He says, 'That *The Tragedy of Queen Gorbuduc* was written in English Verse; and consequently that Verse was not so much a new way amongst us as an old way new reviv'd; and that this Play was written by the late Lord *Buckhurst*, afterwards Earl of *Dorset*.'

Mr. *Dryden*, as well as Sr. *Fopling*, notwithstanding his smattering in the Mathematicks, is out in his Judgment at *Tennis*; for, first, tho' His Majesties late Historiographer, he is mistaken in the Title-page; and I must crave leave to tell him by the by, that I never heard of any such Queen of *Brittain*, any more than he of any King that was in *Rhodes*. Nay, further, had he consulted *Milton*'s History of *England*, or any other Writers of *Brute*'s History, nay, even the Argument of that very Play, he would have found *Gorbuduc* to have been the last King of that Race, at least the Father of *Ferex* and *Porrex*, in whom terminated the Line of *Brute*, and consequently would not have permitted so gross an error to have escapt his Pen for Three Editions; tho' it may be Mr. *Dryden*'s Printer was as much to blame to print *Queen* for *King*, as he ironically accuses Sr. *Robert*'s for setting *shut* for *open*. There are other Errata's in History, which I might impute at least to Mr. *Dryden*'s Negligence; but I shall at present wave them. In the mean time I must acquaint the Reader, that however Mr. *Dryden* alledges that this Play was writ by the Lord *Buckhurst*, I can assure him that the three first Acts were writ by Mr. *Thomas Norton*, and that the Play it self was not written in Rime, but blank Verse, or if

he will have it, in *prose mesurée*; so that Mr. *Shakespear*, notwithstanding our Author's Allegation, was not the first beginner of that way of Writing.

As to his Oeconomy and working up of his Play, our Author is not wholly free from Pillage; witness the last Act, where the Dispute between *Anideo* and *Hippolito*, with *Gonsalvo*'s fighting with the Pirates, is borrow'd from *Petronius Arbyter*, as the Reader may see by reading the Story of *Encolpius*, *Giton*, *Eumolpus*, and *Tryphœna*, aboard *Licas*'s Vessel.[1] To say nothing of the Resemblance of the *Catastrophe* with that of *Scarron*'s *Rival Brothers*, *Novel* the Fifth.

Secret Love, or *The Maiden Queen*, a Tragi-Comedy acted by His Majesties Servants at the Theatre-Royal, printed in quarto, *Lond.* 1679. I have already made some observations on this Preface (*p.* 42), and cannot pass by his making use of *Bayes*'s Art of Transversing, as any One may observe by comparing the Fourth *Stanza* of his First Prologue with the last Paragraph of the Preface to *Ibrahim*. As to the Contrivance of the Plot, the serious part of it is founded on the History of *Cleobuline*, Queen of *Corinth*, Part 7, Book 2. The Characters of *Celadon*, *Florimel*, *Olinda*, and *Sabina* are borrow'd from the Story of *Pisistrates* and *Cerintha* in the *Grand Cyrus*, Part 9, Book 3, and from the Story of the *French Marquess* in *Ibrahim*, Part 2, Book 1.

Sir Martin Mar-all, or *The Feign'd Innocence*, a Comedy acted at His Highness the Duke of *York's* Theatre, printed in quarto, *Lond.* 1678. This Play is generally ascrib'd to Mr. *Dryden*, tho' his Name be not affix'd to it. But in reality the Foundation of it is originally *French*; and whoever will compare it with *M. Quinault*'s *L'Amant Indiscret*, and *Molliere*'s *L'Etourdy, ou le contre temps*, will find not only the Plot, but a great part of the Language of

[1] *Not. Var.* p. 360, &c.

Sr. Martin and his Man *Warner* borrow'd. There are several other Turns of the Plot copied from other Authors, as *Warner*'s playing on the Lute instead of his Master, and his being surpriz'd by his Folly; see *Francion*, written by *M. Du Parc*, Lib. 7. *Old Moody* and *Sr. John* being hoisted up in their Altitudes is taken (at least the hint of it) from *Shakerly Marmion*'s *Fine Companion*, Act 4, Sc. 1. The Song of *Blind Love to this Hour* (as I have already observ'd) is translated from a Song made by *M. de Voiture*,[1] tho' I must do Mr. *Dryden* the Justice to acquaint the World, that he has kept to the Sence and the same Measure of Verse.

Spanish Fryar, or *The Double Discovery*, a Tragi-Comedy acted at the Duke's Theatre; printed in quarto, *Lond.* 1681, and dedicated to the Right Honourable *John* Lord *Haughton*. Whether Mr. *Dryden* intended his Character of *Dominick* as a Satyr on the Romish Priests only, or on the Clergy of all Opinions in general, I know not; but sure I am, that he might have spar'd his Reflecting Quotation in the Front of his Play:

Ut melius possis fallere sume togam.

But the truth is, ever since a certain Worthy Bishop refus'd Orders to a certain Poet, Mr. *Dryden* has declar'd open defiance against the whole Clergy; and since the Church began the War, he has thought it but Justice to make Reprisals on the Church. Mr. *Dryden*, who is famous for collecting Observations and Rules for Writing, has learnt this great *Arcanum* from his Brother Poet, the Tutor of *Pacheco* in the Comedy of the *Reformation*,[2] 'That this one piece of Art of Reflecting, in all he writes, on Religion and the Clergy, has set off many an indifferent Play, by the titilation it affords the Gallants, who are sure to get those Verses all by heart, and fill their Letters with

[1] *Poesies de M. Voiture*, p. 457.

[2] Act 4, p. 8.

them to their Country Friends. But whatever success this way of Writing may find from the Sparks, it can never be approv'd on by sober Men; and there are none who have any sense of Religion themselves, that can without concern suffer it to be abus'd; and none but Apostates or Atheists will be so impudent to attempt it; and the real cause of their Envy and Malice is the same with that of the Emperor to his Son *Aureng-zebe*,[1] which with Reference to the Clergy may be thus apply'd:

> *Our Clergy's sacred Virtues shine too bright,*
> *They flash too fierce; their foes, like birds of night,*
> *Shut their dull Eyes, and sicken at the sight.*

The Comical Parts of the *Spanish Fryar*, *Lorenzo* and *Elvira*, are founded on Monsieur *S. Bremond*'s Novel call'd the *Pilgrim*.

State of Innocence, or *The Fall of Man*, an Opera written in Heroick Verse, printed in quarto, *Lond.* 1678, and dedicated to Her Royal Highness the Dutchess. Whether the Author has not been guilty of the highest Flattery in this Dedication, I leave to the Reader's Judgment; but I may presume to say, that there are some Expressions in it that seem strain'd, and a Note beyond *Ela*; as for Instance, 'Your Person is so admirable that it can scarce receive addition when it shall be glorified; and your Soul, which shines through it, finds it of a Substance so near her own, that she will be pleas'd to pass an Age within it, and to be confin'd to such a Pallace.' This Dramma is commended by a Copy of Verses written by Mr. *Lee*; and the Author has prefixt an Apology for Heroick Poetry and Poetick Licence. The foundation of this Opera is fetcht from Mr. *Milton*'s *Paradise Lost*. How far our Author has transcrib'd him, I shall leave to the inquiry of the Curious, that will take the pains to compare the Copy with the Original.

[1] *Aureng-zebe*, Act i, p. 10.

Tempest, or *The Inchanted Island*, a Comedy acted at His Royal Highness the Duke of *York*'s Theatre, and printed in quarto, *Lond.* 1676. This Play is originally *Shakespear*'s (being the first Play printed in the Folio Edition) and was revis'd by Sr. *D'Avenant* and Mr. *Dryden*. The Character of the Saylors were not only the Invention of the former, but for the most part of his Writing, as our Author ingeniously confesseth in his Preface. 'Tis likewise to his Praise that he so much commends his deceas'd Predecessor. But as to his Reflections on Mr. *Fletcher* and Sr. *John Suckling* for having copied, the One, his *Sea Voyage*, the other, his *Goblins*, from this Play, I believe were Mr. *Dryden* to be try'd by the same Standard, most of his Plays would appear Copies.

Troilus and Cressida, or *Truth found out too late*, a Tragedy acted at the Duke's Theatre, to which is prefixt a Preface containing the Grounds of Criticisme in Tragedy, printed in quarto, *Lond.* 1679, and dedicated to the Right Honourable *Thomas* Earl of *Sunderland*. This Play was likewise first written by *Shakespear*, and revis'd by Mr. *Dryden*, to which he added several new Scenes, and even cultivated and improv'd what he borrow'd from the Original. The last Scene in the third Act is a Masterpiece, and whether it be copied from *Shakespear*, *Fletcher*, or *Euripides*, or all of them, I think it justly deserves Commendation. The Plot of this Play was taken by Mr. *Shakespear* from *Chaucer*'s *Troilus and Cressida*, which was translated (according to Mr. *Dryden*) from the Original Story, written in Latine Verse by One *Lollius*, a *Lombard*.

Tyranick Love, or *The Royal Martyr*, a Tragedy acted by His Majesties Servants at the Theatre-Royal, printed in quarto, *Lond.* 1677, and dedicated to the Most Illustrious Prince *James* Duke of *Monmouth* and *Bucclugh*. This

Tragedy is writ in Heroick Verse, and several Hints are borrow'd from other Authors, but much improv'd. Only I cannot but observe that whenever the Criticks pursue him, he withdraws for shelter under the Artillery of the Ancients, and thinks by the discharge of a Quotation from a Latine Author to destroy their Criticisms. Thus in the Preface to his Play, he vindicates the following Line in his Prologue,

And he who servilely creeps after Sence
Is safe,

By that Quotation of *Horace*,

Serpit humi tutus.

So he justifies the following Line in the end of the Fourth Act,

With Empty Arms embrace you whilst you sleep,

From this Expression in *Virgil*,

——*Vacuus amplectitur Ulnis.*

I could cite you other passages out of his *Conquest of Granada, Indian Emperor, State of Innocence, &c.*, but these are sufficient to shew how much *Self-justification* is an Article of our Author's Creed. As to the Plot of this Tragedy, 'tis founded on History; see *Zosimus*, L. 4, *Socrates*, L. 5, C. 14, *Herodiani Hist.* L. 7 and 8, *Jul. Capitolinus, in Vit. Max. Jun.*

Wild Gallant, a Comedy acted at the Theatre Royal by Their Majesties Servants, and printed in quarto, *Lond.* 1669. This Play, tho' the last mention'd, by reason of the Alphabetical Order throughout observ'd, was yet the first attempt which our Author made in Dramatick Poetry, and met with but indifferent Success in the Action. The Plot he confesses was not originally his own; but, however, having so much alter'd and beautified it, we will do him the Honour to call him the Author of the *Wild Gallant*, as he has done Sr. *Robert Howard*, the Author of the Duke

of *Lerma*[1]; and by way of Excuse I shall transcribe his own Lines in behalf of a New Brother of *Parnassus*[2].

'Tis Miracle to see a first good Play,
All Hawthorns do not bloom on Christmas-day;
A slender Poet must have time to grow,
And spread and burnish as his Brothers do.
Who still looks lean, sure with some Pox is curst;
But no Man can be Falstaff *Fat at first.*

I am next to give the Reader an Account of his other Writings and Transactions, as far as they are come to my Knowledge, and I shall begin with those in Verse, because nearer ally'd to my present Subject. There are several pieces of this Nature said to be writ by him; as Heroick *Stanzas* on the late Usurper *Oliver Cromwel*, written after his Funeral, and printed in quarto, *Lond.* 1659. *Annus Mirabilis, The Year of Wonders*, 1666: An Historical *Poem* describing the *Dutch War* and the *Fire of London*, printed in octavo, *Lond.* 1667. *Absalom and Achitophel*, printed in quarto, *Lond.* 1682. This last, with several other of his Poems, as the *Medal, Mack Flecknoe, &c.*, are printed in *A Collection of Poems*, in octavo, *Lond.* 1684. *Sylva*, or a Second Volume of *Poetical Miscellanies*, in octavo, *Lond.* 1685. *Religio Laici*, printed in quarto, *Lond.* 1682. *Threnodia Augustalis*, or a Funeral-Pindarique Poem on King *Charles* the Second, printed in quarto, *Lond.* 1685. *Hind and Panther*, in quarto, *Lond.* 1687. *Britannia Rediviva*, a Poem on the Birth of the Prince, in Fol. *Lond.* 1688.

In Prose he has writ *An Essay of Dramatick Poetry*, in quarto, *Lond.* 1668. *Vindication of the Duke of Guise*, in quarto, *Lond.* 1683. *The Life of Plutarch*, in octavo, *Lond.* 1683. And some *Theological Pieces* which I have not by

[1] Defence of his *Dramatick Essay*, p. 5.
[2] *Miscellany Poems*, 8°, 1684, p. 292.

me at present. He has translated *The History of the League, The Life of St. Xavier,* &c.

Now, that Mr. *Dryden* may not think himself slighted in not having some Verses inserted in his Commendation, I will present the Reader with a Copy written by Mr. *Flecknoe,* and leave him to Judge of his Wit and Mr. *Dryden*'s Gratitude, by comparing the Epistle Dedicatory to his *Kind Keeper* and his Satyr call'd *Mack Flecknoe* with the following Epigram:

To Mr. *John Dryden.*

Dryden, *the Muses Darling and delight,*
Than whom none ever flew so high a flight,
Some have their Vains so drossy, as from Earth
Their Muses only seem to have ta'ne their Birth;
Other but Water-Poets *are, have gone*
No farther than to th' Fount of Helicon*;*
And they'r but airy Ones *whose* Muse *soars up*
No higher than to Mount Pernassus *top;*
Whilst thou with thine, dost seem to have mounted higher
Than he who fetcht from Heaven *Celestial Fire,*
And dost as far surpass all others, as
Fire *does all other Elements surpass.*

JOHN DENNIS

THE IMPARTIAL CRITICK, OR SOME OBSERVATIONS UPON A LATE BOOK, ENTITULED A SHORT VIEW OF TRAGEDY, WRITTEN BY MR. RYMER

1693

A LETTER TO A FRIEND

Sent with the Following

DIALOGUES

SIR,

UPON reading Mr. *Rymer*'s late Book, I soon found that its Design was to make several Alterations in the Art of the Stage, which instead of reforming would ruine the *English Drama*. For to set up the *Grecian* Method amongst us with success, it is absolutely necessary to restore not only their Religion and their Polity, but to transport us to the same Climate in which *Sophocles* and *Euripides* writ; or else, by reason of those different Circumstances, several things which were graceful and decent with them must seem ridiculous and absurd to us, as several things which would have appear'd highly extravagant to them must look proper and becoming with us.

For an Example of the first: The Chorus had a good effect with the *Athenians*, because it was adapted to the Religion and Temper of that People, as I have observ'd more at large in the Fourth Dialogue. But we having nothing in our Religion or Manners by which we may be able to defend it, it ought certainly to be banished from our Stage. For Poetry in general being an imitation of Nature, Tragedy must be so too. Now it is neither probable nor

natural that the Chorus, who represent the Interested Spectators of a Tragical Action, should Sing and Dance upon such terrible or moving Events as necessarily arrive in every Tragedy. And I wonder that Mr. *Rymer* should cry up a Chorus in the very same Book in which he cries down the Opera; for no Man can give any reason why an Opera is an extravagant thing, but I will, by retorting the same Reason, prove a Chorus extravagant too. But to make the absurdity of it the more apparent, let me desire you, *Sir*, a little to look back to the *Spanish Invasion*, which Mr. *R*—— fancies a proper Subject for a Tragedy. Suppose, then, that an Express gives Notice to Queen *Elizabeth* of the Landing of the *Spaniards* upon our Coast, and of great Number of Subjects revolting and running in to them. The Queen, upon the reception of this News, falls a lamenting her Condition, with an Air becoming of a Sovereign Princess, in whom Sorrow and Majesty must be united; so far there is no offence to Nature or Decency, for this may be call'd Tragedy upon the Stage of the World. But then, *Sir*, suppose as soon as the Queen has left off lamenting, the Ladies about her, in their Ruffs and Farthingals, fell a dancing a *Saraband* to a doleful Ditty. Do you think, *Sir*, that if this had really happened at *White-Hall*, it would have been possible to have beheld it without laughing, tho' one had been never so much concerned for his Country? Now, can any thing that is incongruous and absurd in the World be proper and decent on the Tragick Stage?

I now beg leave, *Sir*, to give a particular instance of something that must needs have been very moving with the *Athenians*, which yet would have been but ill receiv'd amongst us: And that is a passage in the *Antigone* of *Sophocles*. That Story, as it is manag'd by that admirable Poet, is one of the most moving that ever was: And there is no part of it that touches me more than the Complaints of

Antigone upon her Condemnation by *Creon.* But there is one thing peculiar in it, which must needs have excited Compassion in the *Athenians* in an extraordinary manner; for otherwise *Sophocles*, who perfectly understood his Audience, would never have made her repeat it at least four times in the same Act; For when she was condemn'd to the severest Punishment, which was to be buried alive, the thing that lay most heavy upon her Heart was that she was to go to Hell with her Maiden-head. I think, *Sir*, I need not take pains to demonstrate that this passage would have been laugh'd at with us. Now, what reason can be given, why that should appear so contemptible to us, which mov'd the *Athenians* so much? The only Reason that can be assign'd is the difference of Climate and Customs. The *Athenians*, by using their Women as the Modern *Italians* do theirs, plainly declared their Opinion of them; which was, that Passion was predominant over Reason in them, and that they were perpetually thinking how they might make some Improvement of the Talent which NATURE had given their Sex. The *Athenians* therefore having these thoughts of their Women, the Complaint that *Antigone* made could not appear peculiar and surprizing to them. Now it is evident that every thing which is ridiculous must be both particular and surprizing; for nothing which is general and expected can excite a sensible Man to Laughter. But we having quite contrary thoughts of our Women, which is plain by the Confidence which we so generously repose in them, a Maid who had said what *Antigone* did upon our Stage would have said something that would have appear'd a frailty particular and surprizing, and would have been ridiculous.

Thus, *Sir*, have I given you two instances of things which succeeded very well with the Ancients, and would yet be very ill receiv'd amongst us, upon the account of

the difference of our Religion, Climate, and Customs. I shall now give you some account of a thing which is very well receiv'd upon our Stage, but would have succeeded but ill with the Ancient *Grecians*, by reason of the same difference of Climate and Customs.

The thing that I mean is Love, which could but rarely be brought upon the *Grecian* Stage without the violation of probability, considering that their Scene lay generally in their own, or a warmer Country: For two People in a Tragedy cannot make Love without being together, and being alone. Now when Lovers came together in *Greece*, they found something else to do than to talk. Their Women, under so warm a Sun, melted much sooner than ours. Nor were they so fantastick as long to refuse what they eternally desire⟨d⟩, or to pretend a mortal displeasure for being offer'd to be oblig'd in the most sensible part of them. Therefore most of the Love that appear'd upon the *Athenian* Stage was between such People as their own Customs oblig'd to cohabit, as *Admetus* and *Alcestis*, who were Man and Wife, *Hippolitus* and *Phedra*, who were Son and Mother-in-Law, and with which last the only Obstacle to Enjoyment was the Horrour which so Criminal a Passion inspir'd. Had the *Athenian* Poets introduc'd upon their Stage two passionate Lovers who had not been related, and engag'd them in a Conversation both tender and delicate, an Audience would have been apt to ask, with the *Spanish Lady* mentioned by Monsieur St. *Euremont*: *Que d'esprit mal employé! A quoy bon tous ces beaux discours quand ils sont ensemble?* You know, *Sir*, that this Lady made this Reflection, which St. *Euremont* commends so much, upon the Reading a Conversation in *Cleopatra* between two passionate Lovers. Upon which that ingenious Gentleman, with his usual good Sence, takes occasion to condemn *Calprenede* for making no distinction betwixt the *Love* of a *Southern* Climate and that of *England* or *France*.

By what I have said, *Sir*, it may be easily guess'd that it is in vain to think of setting up a Chorus upon the *English* Stage because it succeeded at *Athens*, or to think of expelling *Love* from our Theatres because it was rarely in *Grecian Tragedies.*

But since I shall treat of this last hereafter, and I have already trespassed upon your Patience, I shall only beg leave of you to make one Apology for my self, and so for the present take leave of you.

Let then the Admirers of Mr. *Waller* know,—that is, all the ingenious Men in the Kingdom,—that if I have in the following Dialogues rigorously examin'd some Verses which were writ by that Great Man, I have been far from doing it out of a motive of Malice or Vanity, or so much with a design to attack Mr. *Waller* as to vindicate *Shakespear.*

For Mr. *Rymer*, who pretends that this last is without Excellency, affirming that the fore-mention'd Verses of the first are without Fault, it appears to me to be very plain that the Man who overlookt Mr. *Waller*'s Faults might overlook *Shakespear*'s Excellencies. For it is much more easie to find Faults than it is to discern Beauties. To do the first requires but common Sence, but to do the last a Man must have Genius.

There is no Man who has a greater Veneration for Mr. *Waller* than I have. We have all of us reason to Honour the Man who has been an Honour to *England.* And it is with an inexpressible pleasure that I find his Death lamented by two great *French* Wits, *viz. La Fontaine* and Monsieur St. *Euremont.* A Man may in many places of Mr. *Waller*'s Works see not only Wit, Spirit, good Sence, but a happy and delicate turn of Thought, with clearness, boldness, justness, sublimeness, and gallantry. For the last of these Qualities, I know not whither he has been surpass'd by any Writer in any Language.

Voiture, indeed, is a very gallant Writer too; but his

Gallantry is of such a different Character from our *English* Poets that they will not admit of Comparison. Mr. *Waller*'s is more sprightly, more shining, more bold, and more admirable. The *French*-man's, by the Character of his Country, more supple, more soft, more insinuating, and more bewitching. But besides those rare Qualities which are to be found in that Admirable Man, there are Two for which we were in a peculiar manner oblig'd to him. For he not only improv'd the Language of our Verse considerably, but was the first who us'd our Ears to the Musick of a just Cadence. Yet if any one is of Opinion that either his Language or Numbers are always perfect, he errs: For as there are sometimes Improprieties in his Expressions, so there is a great deal of Prose in his Verse. Mr. *Dryden*, who had the good luck to come after him, has the Honour to have finish'd what the other so happily begun. For as we have nothing to shew, ev'n in Prose, which has a greater purity than some of his blank Verse, and particularly that of the *Spanish Fryar* (thô at the same time that it has the purity and easiness of Prose, it has the dignity and strength of Poetry), so I cannot imagine any thing more perfect than his Equal Numbers in Heroick Verse, where-ever he design'd them perfect; and in this he will never be exceeded by any Man, unless length of Time makes some strange Alteration in the Tongue. I do not believe that any sensible Man can believe I say this to flatter him: For what can be got by flattering a Poet, especially a Poet in Mr. *Dryden*'s Circumstances? But this we may be assur'd of, that as long as we are foolishly partial to the Dead and unreasonably unjust to the Living, we must resolve to continue at a stand in Politer Learning, and must not think of making that Progress which the *French* have made. I know very well that we have greater Geniuses in *England* than they have in *France*, and that

we can shew better Writers; but that they can shew more good Writers than we, no Man who knows them can doubt. Since our Poets want the solid Encouragement that theirs have, that is, the plentiful Pensions, It would be folly to deny them that fantastick Possession which they are contented and pleas'd with; since Fame is a sort of an Airy Revenue which they who unjustly detain from the Owners cannot themselves enjoy, it shews a base Envy to put the Legal Owners off to a vain Reversion.

Thus, *Sir*, have I sent you my Thoughts with a great deal more hast than ever I thought to have writ any thing which was design'd to be published. I desire you therefore to pardon the negligence of the expression, if you find never so little good Sence to make some amends for it.

I am,
SIR,
Yours, &c.

THE FIRST DIALOGUE

Beaumont, Freeman.

Beaum. *JACK Freeman!* This is an unexpected, and a surprizing Visit: with what Impatience have I long'd for this happy Hour, and how have I regretted this tedious Absence! Prithee, how long hast thou been in Town?

Freem. But just time enough to shift me; yet time enough to receive two Assignations, the one from a Lawyer, and the other from a Wench, who, as the Devil would have it, saw me as I passed in the Stage-Coach thro' the *Hay Market*. But I resolv'd to visit neither till I had seen thee.

Beaum. Surprizingly kind! especially in this infamous Town, where 'tis almost scandalous to be so much a Friend; where Friendship is seen to give place, not only

to Business and Pleasure, but sometimes too even to Vanity; where I have known an old grave Rogue, who has had nothing to do, disappoint three or four honest Fellows, purely that he might be thought a Raskal of Business; and where I have known a young Fop baulk a Drinking Appointment out of a longing desire to be thought more leud, and diverted by some wicked Adventure. But, prithee, how do all our Friends in *Hampshire?*

Freem. Why, Faith, here of late they have done something odly; but by the help of the Bottle, they have still made a hard shift: they have been as constantly wet as the Weather in this obstinate Season, and being forbid by the perpetual Rains to follow the daily Labour of their Country Sports, they have handed about their Brimmers within doors as fast as if they had done it for Exercise. But I long to hear some News from thee. What say our Politick Grumblers now?

Beaum. Dost not thou know, *Jack*, that I hate both Politicks and Politicians; every Politician who is not in a Publick Station is an Ass, and the severest Satyr on so fantastick an Animal as Man; s'death! that a Creature so very impotent should yet be so very busie; he has seldom either Wisdom to fore-see or Power to prevent the least Accidents that befal him in his own little private Capacity, yet must be insolently enquiring into Secrets of State and medling with mighty Kingdoms. For my part, I very often seek leud Company a Nights, tho' I hate it, on purpose to escape the News-mongers, and *Dyer* is not at more expence and trouble to obtain his Intelligence than I am to avoid the Clamour of it.

Freem. Well said, moral *Ned Beaumont*! Philosophy and Whimsie, I see, are not inconsistent, however the Schools would impose upon us. This puts me in mind of a very odd Answer from one whom I ask'd once, What

a Clock it was by his Watch? he reply'd, That he had never been such a Sott as to throw away his Money on Watches; that he, indeed, was as profuse as another, but that the very design of his Profusion was to be ignorant how the time past away; that the very Sound of a Clock or an Alarum occasioned melancholy Reflections in him, and disturbed the Tranquility of his Mind. So that this Fellow had as firmly resolved not to perplex his Noddle with the Apprehensions of Hell and Futurity, as thou hast determin'd not to trouble thy Head with the Fear of a *French* Invasion. But, prithee, what News from the Commonwealth of Learning? You use to be more inquisitive after what passes there, and able to inform a Friend of it. What New Books have you now abroad?

Beaum. I sent you down Two by the Carrier, the *Juvenal* and the *Account of Tragedy*; and we have had none since in the Politer Studies that deserve any consideration.

Freem. I read them over with a great deal of pleasure and some application. Dear *Ned*, How have I long'd to talk with thee of the latter!

Beaum. Aye, *Jack*, the latter: tell me truly, Hadst not thou discovered, tho' there had been no Name to it, that it was written by the same Gentleman, the same Judicious and Learned Gentleman, who writ the Observations upon the Tragedie⟨s⟩ of the Last Age? Does not the same Spirit of Learning and exquisite Sence seem to be diffus'd throughout it?

Freem. There is good Sence and Learning in both those Books; but if I may have liberty to speak my Mind, *Ned*, before you, who are the Author's Friend, there seems to be more Learning in the latter Book, and more good Sence in the former.

Beaum. Pray, Sir, what Exceptions have you to the Sence of the latter?

Freem. Why, to use plain dealing with one who is so much my Friend, I am neither satisfied with the Design of that Book, nor with the Method of carrying on that Design, nor with the Stile in which it was written.

Beaum. But sure you cannot find fault with the Stile, *Jack*. Canst thou have a Quarrel to Pleasantry?

Freem. Pleasantry! you may call it what you please, *Sir*, but that pleasant way is by no means fit for a Critick: a Critick, whose business it is to instruct, should keep to the Didactick Stile, as *Aristotle*, *Longinus*, and the *French* Criticks have done; for if a Man is eternally Laughing, how can I possibly fall into his Opinion, who know not if he speaks in good earnest?

Beaum. Why surely, *Jack*, one of your Apprehension may easily discern when another rallies, and when he speaks what he means.

Freem. Your Servant, good Mr. *Beaumont*! But supposing that may be done, when a laughing Critick condemns an Author, how can I know whether he has convicted him by the advantage of his Wit or the force of his Argumentation? The best thing in the World is as liable to be ridicul'd as the silliest. Has not *Scarron* impudently diverted all *Europe* at the Expence of *Virgil*, the best of Poets and the justest of Writers? upon which an ingenious *French*-man has made this Observation, That as all Human Grandeur is but Folly, so Sublimeness and the Ridiculum are very nearly related.

Beaum. But what is it that you call the Didactick Stile, *Jack*? for I have read so little of Criticism or of Rhetorick since I have enjoy'd the leisure of a Country Life, that I have great need to be inform'd.

Freem. The Didactick Stile is a Stile that is fit for Instruction, and must be necessarily upon that account pure, perspicuous, succinct, unaffected, and grave.

Beaum. Every Stile ought to have three of these

qualities, for barbarity, obscurity, and affectation must certainly be faults in all. But why, particularly, does the Didactick Stile demand succinctness and gravity?

Freem. It requires Succinctness that its Precepts may be more readily comprehended and more easily retain'd; and it requires Gravity to give it an Air of Authority, and cause it to make the deeper impression.

Beaum. For my part, I thought Gravity had been long since laught out of the World.

Freem. The false and affected Gravity has been justly and deservedly laught at, but the true both is and will always be venerable, being the genuine result of Wisdom and Vertue; that Gravity will be always laught at, that strives to impose a Fool upon the World for a Man of Sence, or a Raskal for a Man of Honour; for all Cheats, when they are found out, are despicable.

Beaum. But have I not seen thee laughing at a Fellow only for looking gravely, tho' you never had heard him speak?

Freem. Yes, but by that very Gravity I soon discover'd the Blockhead in him; for to a Man who understands the World never so little, a Fool never looks so sillily as when he attempts to look wisely; which *Butler* had certainly in his Head, when he writ the following Couplet:

> *For Fools are known by looking wise,*
> *As men find Woodcocks by their Eyes.*

'Tis, as it were, a Revenge which Nature takes of them for forcing her by Affectation; for Gravity must be always affected, when it accompanies Vice or Folly; but it is natural to Wisdom and Vertue. Now, Nature will always be held reverend, and Affectation contemptible.

Beaum. Pray, what do you take Gravity to be? for I have never consider'd it yet with attention.

Freem. I think I may venture to describe it thus:

Gravity is a compos'd and majestick assurance, which appears in a Man's looks or his air or manner of expression, and proceeds from the tranquility and greatness of a Mind that is guided by the Dictates of right Reason.

Beaum. Very well. But are not we then as obnoxious to be impos'd on by that Assurance and that Air of Authority which always go along with Gravity, as much as we are on the other side by the Sophistication of Pleasantry, which stums, as it were, an Argument, if I may use that expression, to render it agreeable to the taste of those who are ignorant?

Freem. Not one jot obnoxious on that score; for Gravity can no more make a silly Notion pass upon a Man of Sence than it can set off a Blockhead. Pleasantry, indeed, may make Sophistry pass upon us, because it puts the Mind into agitation, and makes it unfit for enquiry; but Gravity never fails to make it serene, and dispose it for the strictest Scrutiny.

Beaum. Well, you have here said enough to make me wish that Mr. *R*—— had made choice of another Stile. But you told me that you dislik'd the Design of his Book.

Freem. Yes, but I have neither eat nor drunk since I came to Town, and——

Beaum. I have Wine in my Chamber.

Freem. But I have not been in a Tavern this month. Therefore prithee let's to the *Old Devil*, and talk the rest o're a Bottle.

Beaum. Since it is your inclination, it shall be so.

DIALOGUE II

Beaumont, Freeman, Drawer.

Beaum. SO, Sirrah! What need we have come so near Heaven to be wicked?

Draw. I'll make you amends in your Wine, Master.

Beaum. Look you do, Sir. Let me see, it must be Your best *Red*, I think. Well, we have at least got this advantage by mounting, that we are not like to be interrupted, which is as great a Plague to Criticks as it is to Poets; not so much as a Drawer will come near us without half an hour's ringing for him, so that I am in no danger of getting drunk to Night, tho' I am in wicked *Jack Freeman*'s Company.

Freem. Sir, you do me too much Honour, tho' I dare swear no body will take me for a Saint, who knows I have been thy Friend these ten Years. But prithee, what sort of Men were those two whom you spoke to in coming up Stairs?

Beaum. Why, one of them was a Bookseller. Now pray guess what the other was.

Freem. Why, Faith, an Author.

Beaum. If ever thou art indicted for a Magician, I'll turn Evidence, egad; it was an Author, Sir.

Freem. I have been often in terrible apprehension of Authors, but I never was afraid of my Carcase before from one of them; but this indeed had like to have faln foul upon me; they were both in a sweet pickle.

Beaum. I suppose that *Morecraft* has been treating his Author with the Generosity of a true Bookseller; that is, with intention to make him Drunk, and so to cheat him of his Copy.

Freem. If that was his Design, the Author has turn'd the Dice upon him, I gad; for *Morecraft* is by much in the

worse Condition of the two, and perhaps the Dog drank till he grew generous in earnest.

Beaum. If it should prove so, to morrow he'll hang for his Vertue; for such a true bred Raskal can never forgive himself a good Action, especially if it has been costly to him.

Freem. You seem to know him well, Sir. But see, here comes the Wine: Sirrah, fill to this Gentleman.

Beaum. Come, *Jack*, remembring our *Hampshire* Friends. Faith, 'tis good Wine; but a Pox of this *Port*, it is not so well tasted as *Claret*, and it intoxicates sooner.

Freem. Why, Faith, the intention was good; but I think, in my Conscience, the Prohibition of *Claret* has mainly promoted Drunkenness. Come, here's the foresaid Health to you.

Beaum. I thank you; and now to our business: but before we proceed to this Book again, I desire you to give me some satisfaction in relation to a passage in the Dedication. For Mr. *Rymer*, mentioning the *Greek Oedipus*, says afterwards of the *French* and the *English*, *Quantum mutatus*. Now I have always taken our *English Oedipus* to be an admirable Play.

Freem. You have had a great deal of reason to do so; and it would certainly have been much better, if Mr. *Dryden* had had the sole management of it. If Mr. *Rymer*, by his *Quantum mutatus*, designs to fix any mark of disesteem upon Mr. *Dryden*'s Tragedy, he is doubtless to blame; but if he only means that Mr. *Dryden* has alter'd the Character of *Oedipus*, and made it less suitable to the design of Tragedy, according to *Aristotle*'s Rules, then Mr. *Rymer* is in the right of it.

Beaum. Pray shew me that.

Freem. I shall do it as succinctly as I can. The Design of Tragedy, according to *Aristotle*, is to excite compassion and terrour; from whence it necessarily follows that we

are not to make choice of a very vertuous Man to involve him in misery, nor yet, on the other side, of one who is very vicious.

Beaum. I desire to know how you draw that Consequence.

Freem. The Consequence is just: For the making a very good Man miserable can never move compassion nor terror; no, that must rather occasion horrour, and be detested by all the World. On the other side, by representing a very bad Man miserable, a Poet may please an Audience, but can neither move terrour nor pity in them; for terrour is caused in us by a view of the Calamities of our Equals, that is, of those who, resembling us in their faults, make us, by seeing their Sufferings, apprehensive of the like Misfortune. Now, if at any time an Audience sees a very wicked Man punished, each Man who knows himself less guilty is out of all fear of danger, and so there can be no terrour; nor can the calamity of a very wicked Man raise compassion, because he has his desert.

Beaum. What sort of Person must be made choice of then?

Freem. Why, one who is neither vertuous in a sovereign degree nor excessively vicious, but who, keeping the middle between these extreams, is afflicted with some terrible calamity for some involuntary fault.

Beaum. Well, and just such a Man is Mr. *Dryden*'s *Oedipus*, who cannot be said to be perfectly vertuous, when he is both Parricide and Incestuous, nor yet on the other side excessively vicious, when neither his Parricide nor Incest are voluntary, but caused by a fatal ignorance.

Freem. Aye, but says *Dacier*, to punish a man for Crimes that are caused by invincible ignorance is in some measure unjust, especially if that Man has other ways extraordinary Vertues. Now Mr. *Dryden* makes his *Oedipus* just, generous, sincere, and brave, and indeed a Heroe, without any Vices

but the forementiond two, which were unavoidable both. Now *Sophocles* represents *Oedipus* after another manner: the distinguishing Qualities which he gives him are only Courage, Wit, and Success, Qualities which make a Man neither good nor vitious. The extraordinary things that he pretends to have done, in *Sophocles*, are only to have kill'd four Men in his Rage, and to have explain'd the Riddle of *Sphinx*, which the worst Man in the World that had Wit might have done as well as *Oedipus*.

Beaum. Well, but does not *Sophocles* punish *Oedipus* for the very same Crimes that Mr. *Dryden* does, *vid.* for his Incest and Parricide? If not, for what involuntary faults does the *Sophoclean Oedipus* suffer?

Freem. Aristotle, by those Offences which his Interpreter *Dacier* calls involuntary, does not mean only such faults as are caus'd by invincible ignorance, but such to which we are strongly inclin'd either by the bent of our Constitutions or by the force of prevailing Passions. The faults for which *Oepidus* suffers in *Sophocles* are his vain Curiosity in consulting the Oracle about his Birth, his Pride in refusing to yield the way in his return from that Oracle, and his Fury and Violence in attacking four Men on the Road the very day after he had been fore-warn'd by the Oracle that he should kill his Father.

Beaum. But, pray, how were those involuntary faults?

Freem. Dacier means here by involuntary faults, faults that have more of human frailty in them than any thing of design or of black malice. The Curiosity of *Oedipus* proceeded from a Vanity from which no Man is wholly exempt; and his Pride, and the Slaughter that it caused him to commit on the Road, were partly caused by his Constitution and an unhappy and violent Temper. These are faults that both *Aristotle* and *Dacier* suppose that he might have prevented, if he would have used all his diligence; but being guilty of them thro' his neglect, they afterwards plunged

him in those horrible Crimes which were follow'd by his final Ruine. Thus you see the Character of the *Athenean Oedipus* is according to these Rules of *Aristotle*, the fittest that can be imagin'd to give Compassion and Terrour to an Audience. For how can an Audience choose but tremble, when it sees a Man involv'd in the most deplorable Miseries only for indulging those Passions and Frailties which they are but too conscious that they neglect in themselves? And how can they choose but melt with compassion, when they see a Man afflicted by the avenging Gods with utmost severity for Faults that were without malice, and which, being in some measure to be found in themselves, may make them apprehensive of like Catastrophes? For all our Passions, as *Dacier* observes, are grounded upon the Love of ourselves, and that Pity which seems to espouse our Neighbor's Interest is founded still on our own.

Beaum. Why, will you perswade me that because an Audience finds in itself the same vain Curiosity and the same ungovern'd Passions that drew *Oedipus* to Murder and Incest, that therefore each Spectator should be afraid of killing his Father and committing Incest with his Mother?

Freem. No, you cannot mistake me so far; but they may very well be afraid of being drawn in by the like neglected Passions to deplorable Crimes and horrid Mischiefs which they never design'd.

Beaum. Well, then, now I begin to see the reason why, according to the Sence of *Aristotle*, the Character of Mr. *Dryden*'s *Oedipus* is alter'd for the worse: For he, you'll say, being represented by Mr. *Dryden* Soveraignly Vertuous, and guilty of Parricide only by a fatal invincible Ignorance, must, by the severity of his Sufferings, instead of compassion create horrour in us, and a murmuring, as it were, at Providence. Nor can those Sufferings raise terrour in us for his Crimes of fatal invincible Igno-

rance, not being prepar'd, as they are in *Sophocles*, by some less faults, which led him to those Crimes, as it were, by so many degrees. I do not conceive how we can be concern'd at this; for Terrour, you say, arises from the Sufferings of others, upon the account of Faults which are common to us with them. Now what Man can be afraid, because he sees *Oedipus* come down at two Leaps from the height of Vertue to Parricide and to Incest, that therefore this may happen to him? For a Man who is himself in Security cannot be terrified with the Sufferings of others, if he is not conscious to himself of the Faults that caus'd them; but every Man who is disturb'd by unruly Passions, when he sees how the giving way to the same Passions drew *Sophocles*'s *Oedipus* into Tragical Crimes which were never design'd, must by reflection necessarily be struck with Terrour and the apprehension of dire Calamities. This, I suppose, is your Sence.

Freem. Exactly.

Beaum. Well, but the Authority of *Aristotle* avails little with me against irrefutable Experience. I have seen our *English Oedipus* several times, and have constantly found that it hath caus'd both Terrour and Pity in me.

Freem. I will not tell you that possibly you may have mistaken Horrour for Terrour and Pity; for perhaps it is not absolutely true that the Sufferings of those who are Sovereignly Vertuous cannot excite Compassion. But this is indubitable, that they cannot so effectually do it as the Misfortunes of those who, having some Faults, do the more resemble ourselves. And I think that I may venture to affirm two things: First, That if any one but so great a Master as Mr. *Dryden* had had the management of that Character, and had made the same mistake with it, his Play would have been hiss'd off the Stage. And Secondly——

Beaum. I must beg leave to interrupt you. Why should you believe that another Man's Play upon the same Subject

would have miscarried upon that mistake, when I never heard it yet taken Notice of?

Freem. It would have miscarried, tho' the mistake had ne're been found out: For a common Author, proceeding upon such wrong Principles, could never have touch'd the Passions truly. But Mr. *Dryden* having done it by his extraordinary Address, the Minds of his Audience have been still troubled, and so the less able to find his Error.

Beaum. But what was that second thing which you were going to observe?

Freem. It was this: That if Mr. *Dryden* had not alter'd the Character of *Sophocles*, the Terrour and Compassion had been yet much stronger.

Beaum. But how could so great a Man as Mr. *Dryden* make such a mistake in his own Art?

Freem. How did *Corneille* do it before him, who was certainly a great Man too? And if you'll believe *Dacier*, *C'etoit le plus grand genie pour le Theatre qu'on avoit jamais veu.* Great Men have their Errors, or else they would not be Men. Nay, they are mistaken in several things in which Men of a lower Order may be in the right. This has been wisely order'd by Providence that they may not be exalted too much; for if it were not for this, they would look down upon the rest of Mankind as upon Creatures of a lower Species.

Beaum. Do you believe, then, that *Aristotle*, if he could rise again, would condemn our *English Oedipus*?

Freem. He would condemn it, or he would be forc'd to recede from his own Principles; but at the same time that he passed Sentence on it, he would find it so beautiful that he could not choose but love the Criminal; and he would certainly crown the Poet before he would damn the Play.

Beaum. But 'tis high time to return to Mr. *Rymer*'s Book; you were saying you dislik'd the Design of it.

Freem. Yes, but if you will come to morrow Morning to my Lodgings, there I shall give you my Reasons for it. We have criticiz'd sufficiently for one time; besides, at my Chamber I have two or three Books which I may have an occasion to cite.

Beaum. Well, then, let us drink a Glass and be merry. Come, *Jack*, here's your Mistress to you.

Freem. Nay, Faith, *Ned*, I am resolv'd to be Sober to Night.

Beaum. Prithee, canst thou be otherwise in my Company? How many grave Lectures have I been forc'd to read to thee over a Bottle, in order to keep thee sober?

Freem. But, as the Devil would have it, thou art seldom Philosophically given in Company, but at the same time thou art inclin'd to be damnable Drunk too. Have you forgot since you grew drunk in *Hamp-shire* in extolling the Dogma's of *Seneca*? When the Company laugh'd to see the Speculative *Stoick* a Practical *Epicurean*!

Beaum. However, 'tis something to speak for Sobriety, I never heard you do that, unless when we were in *Italy* together; once at *Florence*, for want of leuder Employment, you declaim'd in praise of the *Italian* Temperance; but it was only in order to get a sober Seignior to sit out another Flask with you.

Freem. Faith, Rallery apart, I always esteem'd Drunkenness the most odious of Vices. There is something to be said for Whoring: Whoring is according to Nature, but Drunkenness is a Vice against Nature; we go always with the Stream to Letchery, but we often tug against it to arrive at Drunkenness. He who Drinks five Brimmers in a hand might certainly have perform'd a very good Action without half so much violence offer'd to his inclination. And he, who out of his Love to Conversation is often perswaded to drink hard, might, if he has but never so little delicacy, be vertuous with less reluctancy.

Beaum. But since Drinking is so unnatural a Vice, how comes it so much in fashion amongst us?

Freem. Why, some Witty Men, they say, introduced it upon the Restoration; and the Fools, finding the imitation easie, immediately fell into the Dance.

Beaum. The Wits were horribly o'reseen in beginning it; but the Fools were in the right in carrying it on.

Freem. How can that be?

Beaum. Because a Fool has as much reason to declare for Drunkenness as a poor Dog has to declare for Levelling; for Death does not level Conditions more than Drunkenness equals Capacities. A Blockhead, when he's drunk, may talk as well as a Man of Sence, if in the same Condition, nay, better perhaps; for that quantity of Wine will make a witty Man mad, which will but just be sufficient to animate the cold and flegmatick Mass of a Sot. They who have cause to be asham'd of themselves have reason to be fond of Disguises; now, Drunkenness is a very convenient Mask to make a Blockhead pass *Incognito.*

Freem. Thou art in the right of it, and upon this Remonstrance I would have left it off, if I had been never so fond of it before. But 'tis now some time that I have had a mortal Quarrel to it.

Beaum. I shrewdly suspect that Drunkenness began the Quarrel; for if that had not maul'd you with your Rheumatism, I suppose these Invectives might have been spar'd.

Freem. Well, come, will you go? We'll pay at the Bar.

Beaum. Thou art Seven Years older, and shalt be my Governour. But my Lodgings are nearest, will you go lie with me?

Freem. No, Faith, Sir, I hope for a better Bedfellow; but to Morrow at Eleven I expect you. Till then, Adieu.

Beaum. Your Servant.

DIALOGUE III

Freeman in his Chamber, repeating:

Should Nature's Self invade the World again,
And o're the Center spread the Liquid Main,
Thy Power were safe—

(*Enter to him* Beaumont.)

Beaum. WHY, how now, *Jack*? At the scandalous Exercise of repeating this Morning? Art thou in Debt?

Freem. What makes you ask that?

Beaum. Because, if thou art, thou recitest to scare away Duns perhaps. But whose are those Verses? If they are thine, I scamper immediately.

Freem. You are very merry, Sir.

Beaum. 'Sdeath! I had rather be lampoon'd this Morning than stay to hear a Critick's Verses.

Freem. Well, they are *Waller*'s, Sir.

Beaum. Aye, now thou say'st something, *Jack.*

Waller, by Nature for the Bays design'd,
With Spirit, Force, and Fancy unconfin'd,
In Panegyrick is above Mankind.

At least, *Jack*, thou canst not be so impudent as to dissent from Mr. *Rymer* in his Judgment of those incomperable Verses upon the Fleet.

Freem. I am that impudent Dog, I gad.

Beaum. Why, are not the Thoughts new there?

Freem. Yes.

Beaum. And Noble?

Freem. Yes, very Noble; but a Pox, they are not all of them true tho'.

Beaum. You had best say, too, that the Language is not clean and majestick.

Freem. I need not say so, it says enough of itself.

Beaum. This is down-right Spirit of Contradiction. I defie you to shew me three faults in those Verses without being hypercritical.

Freem. Here, take the Book and repeat them then.

Beaumont reads:

Where e're thy Navy spreads her Canvas Wings,
Homage to thee, and Peace to all she brings.

Have you any thing to say to that Couplet?

Freem. Yes; if Mr. *Waller* had been to say that in Prose, he would have expressed himself otherwise; he would have said thus: Where e're thy Fleet goes she carries Peace to all, and causes all to pay or to do Homage to thee: For, where e're she goes she brings Homage, would not be good *English* in Prose.

Beaum. Why, will you allow nothing to be said in Verse that may not be said in Prose too?

Freem. Yes, an Expression may be too florid or too bold for Prose, and yet be very becoming of Verse. But every Expression that is false *English* in Prose is barbarous and absurd in Verse too. But pray proceed.

Beaumont reads:

The French *and* Spaniard, *when thy Flags appear,*
Forget their Hatred, and consent to Fear.

Freem. I have nothing to say to that Couplet. Go on.

Beaumont reads:

So Jove *from* Ida *did both Hosts survey,*
And when he pleas'd to Thunder, part the Fray.

Is not that a Noble Similitude?

Freem. Yes; but the word Fray is altogether unworthy of the Greatness of the Thought and the Dignity of Heroick Verse. Fray is fitter to express a Quarrel betwixt drunken Bullies than between the *Grecian* and *Trojan* Heroes, and fitter to be parted by *Stokes* than by thundering *Jove*. But go on.

Beaumont reads:

Ships heretofore on Seas like Fishes sped,
The mightier still upon the smaller fed.

Freem. That is to say, as a great Fish Breakfasts or Dines upon a small one, so a great Ship chops up a little one. I have known several, who, to their sorrows, have seen a Ship drink hard, but I never met with any who have seen one eat yet.

Beaum. P'shaw, Pox, this is down-right Banter. This is to fall into the very same fault which you have condemned in others.

Freem. I stand corrected, Sir; without rallery, then, this Metaphor *Feed* is too gross for a Ship, tho' I perfectly know what Mr. *Waller* means by it. But what think you of the word *Sped*? Is that an Heroical word?

Beaum. No, I must confess that *Sped* is something too mean.

Freem. Too mean! why it is fit for nothing but Burlesque, Man. Besides, the word *heretofore* seems too obsolete, nor is *Fishes* very Heroical.

Beaum. Come, *Jack*, you had better let them two pass; it will be an Error on the Right-hand; for Good Nature makes some amends for Error, but Error and Ill Nature is the Devil and all.

Freem. Let them pass then. In the second Verse of this Couplet, we have *mightier* oppos'd to *smaller*, whereas the word that is truly and naturally oppos'd to *smaller* is *greater*.

Beaum. Methinks, too, that should sooner have occur'd to Mr. *Waller*.

Freem. Doubtless it did so. But Mr. *Waller* could not make use of that; for if he had, he must directly and apparently have affirm'd a thing which is not true. For we know very well that a small Privatier will take a Merchant

man bigger than itself. Tho' all that Mr. *Waller* has got by avoiding that Rock has been only to run himself on another; for by opposing *mightier* to *smaller*, he infers that the *mightier* are still *greater*, which is to imply a false thought, if not to express one. But pray go on.

Beaumont reads:

> *Thou on the Deep imposest nobler Laws,*
> *And by that Justice hast remov'd the Cause*
> *Of those rude Tempests which, for Rapine sent,*
> *Too oft, alas, involv'd the Innocent.*

Freem. I see you have taken Notice yourself of the want of a Pause at the end of the first Couplet, by proceeding to the second. But, pray, what is that Comparative *Nobler* referr'd to? For *Laws* are neither mention'd before nor after. Now every Comparative, according to Grammar and good Sence, ought to be referr'd to a Positive: *Nobler Laws* then what? Or then there were when?

Beaum. Why, then there were when one Ship destroy'd another.

Freem. That is as much as to say, *Nobler Laws* than there were when there were no Laws at all. But what do you understand by removing the Cause of those rude Tempests? for that seems to me to be something obscure.

Beaum. Thou art a pleasant Fellow, faith! What, accuse Mr. *Waller* of obscurity?

Freem. I have always admir'd Mr. *Waller* for a great Genius and a gallant Writer. Nor am I more pleas'd with any of his Excellencies than with the clearness of his happy turns. But, from his being generally clear, can you infer that he was not once in his Life obscure? Pray, what do you understand by removing the Cause of those Tempests?

Beaum. Why, I understand the Pyrates; for Mr. *Waller* could not think that our Fleet could remove the Winds, sure.

Freem. No? we shall see that immediately. But what do you understand by involving the Innocent?

Beaum. Why, involving them in Ruine, in Destruction.

Freem. To involve a Man in Ruine is intelligible enough, but barely to involve a Man cannot be good *English* methinks, because it presents no clear Notion of anything to my Mind. But tell me truly, *Ned*, If any one should talk to thee of a rude Tempest, which, sent upon the Ocean for Rapine, sometimes involves a very honest Fellow, would'st not thou swear that that Man banter'd thee? Are not these thoughts and words ill suited?—But I see you have nothing to reply, and therefore proceed.

Beaumont reads:

> *Now shall the Ocean as thy* Thames *be free*
> *From both those Fates of Storms and Pyracy.*

Freem. That is as much as to say, Now your Majesty's Fleet's at Sea, *Boreas* has blown his last. Henceforward the poor Dog will not dare to peep out of his hole, for fear of being serv'd as the *Persian* serv'd his Brethren.

> *In Corum atque Eurum solitus sævire flagellis.*

And as there never was a Storm yet upon the *Thames*, so there shall never be one henceforward upon the Ocean.

Beaum. 'Slife! thou banter'st me now indeed.

Freem. Yet this is the down-right meaning of the Couplet, or there can be no meaning at all in it. But pray go on.

Beaumont reads:

> *But we, most happy, who need fear no Force,*
> *But winged Troops or* Pegasean *Horse.*

Freem. That *winged* should have been *wing'd*; but that was the fault of the Age, and not of Mr. *Waller*, who, to do him Justice, was the first who began to contract our Participles which ended in *ed*, which, being not contracted, exceedingly weaken a Verse.

Beaum. But are all our Participles that end in *ed* to be contracted?

Freem. No, you must except wounded, confounded, boasted, wasted, and the like, because we cannot express two *d's*, or *td*, without a Vowel between them; and consequently we should not be able to distinguish the forementionʼd Participles from their Verbs, if they should be contracted.

Beaum. But is not cursed to be excepted too?

Freem. That may be sometimes excepted too; because, when that Participle is not contracted, it is not only liable to be mistaken for the Preterperfect Tense of its Verb, but for an Adjective of a different signification, *vid.* curst, which signifies the same with fierce.

> *No* Tygress *on* Hyrcanian *Mountains nurst,*
> *No* Lybian Lioness *is half so curst,*

Says Sir *Richard Fanshaw* in his Translation of *Pastor Fido.* But pray go on.

Beaumont reads:

> *ʼTis not so hard for greedy Foes to spoil*
> *Another Nation, as to touch our Soil.*

Freem. There is nothing to say to that. Go on.

Beaumont reads:

> *Should Natureʼs Self invade the World again,*
> *And oʼre the Center spread the Liquid Main,*
> *Thy Power were safe, and her destructive hand*
> *Would but enlarge the Bounds of thy Command.*
> *Thy* ——

Freem. Hold, you go on to⟨o⟩ fast, Mr. *Beaumont.*

Beaum. Why, can any thing be more Noble than this?

Freem. This is truly sublime indeed; but I have an exception to make to the second Verse. For what does Mr. *Waller* mean by spreading the Liquid Main oʼre the Center? The Center is either taken for an imaginary

Point, which is Mathematically in the midst of the Globe, and so to spread any thing over the Center cannot be good Sence; or the Center is taken for the whole Globe, consisting of Land and Sea, and then to spread the Main over the Center is to spread the Center over itself.

Beaum. This Criticism seems to be just enough.

Freem. Nor am I satisfied with the Epithet, Liquid; for every Epithet is to be look'd upon as a Botch, which does not add to the thought. Now it is impossible to think of the Sea without thinking that it is Liquid at the same time. But go on.

Beaumont reads:

Thy Power were safe, and her destructive hand
Would but enlarge the Bounds of thy Command.

Freem. Well, go on.

Beaumont reads:

Thy dreadful Fleet would stile thee Lord of All,
And ride in Triumph o're the drowned Ball;
Those Towers of Oak o're fertile Plains might go,
And visit Mountains where they once did grow.

Freem. This is a noble passage indeed; but the word drowned is not sonorous, besides it should be contracted. Proceed.

Beaumont reads:

The World's Preserver never could endure
That finish'd Babel *should those Men secure,*
Whose Pride design'd that Fabrick to have stood
Above the reach of any Second Flood.

Freem. Come, make an end.

Beaumont reads:

To thee his Chosen more indulgent, He
Dares trust such Pow'r with so much Piety.

Freem. That *He* seems to be a Botch. But methinks Mr. *Rymer* has a very odd Observation at the latter end of

these Verses; for here, says he, is both *Homer* and *Virgil*, here is the pious *Æneas* and the *Fortis Achilles*; whereas Mr. *Waller* does not design to praise the King for his Valour here. There is a great deal of difference betwixt Power and Valour; the last is Personal, the other in the reach of Fortune.

Beaum. Well, but you declare, then, that you are of too refin'd a tast to relish *Waller*?

Freem. I thought I had declar'd the quite contrary. My design in making these Remarks on his Verses upon the Fleet was only to shew you that Mr. *Rymer* has mistaken the most incorrect Copy of Verses that perhaps Mr. *Waller* has writ for one of his rarest Masterpieces. Yet all incorrect as those Verses are, I have told you that I perfectly admir'd some places in them; from whence any Man may reasonably conclude that I have an Opinion of Mr. *Waller*, in the main, which is answerable to the Merit of that extraordinary Man.

Beaum. But methinks the very faults of a Great Man ought to be respected upon the account of his Excellencies.

Freem. The very contrary of which is true: Upon that account they ought to be the rather expos'd. His Faults are the more dangerous on the account of his Excellencies. For young Writers, before they have Judgment to distinguish, are sometimes so far mistaken as to copy the very Faults of famous Poets for Beauties. One thing I will easily grant you, that to expose a Great Man's Faults, without owning his Excellencies, is altogether unjust and unworthy of an honest Man.

Beaum. Well: But since you will not allow these Verses to be what Mr. *Rymer* affirms them to be, pray let me hear you name a Copy of Verses whose Thoughts or Language you have no exception to. But a Pox, a Caviller can never esteem any thing perfect.

Freem. Then will I shew you that I am no Caviller.

Beaum. Nay, I am certain, I can name one Author whose Verses you can have no exception to.

Freem. Pray, who may they be, Sir?

Beaum. Who may it be? why, who the Devil should it be but thy Self, Man? To whose Verses can a Critick have no exception but his own? Come, prithee, *Jack*, let us hear one of thy finish'd Pieces now. Come, do not I know that thou wouldest not have taken all this pains to pull down the Reputation of another, if it were not to set up thy own?

Freem. Curse of this unseasonable Rallery! Can any thing be more insipid than an untimely Jest?

Beaum. Why are you so barbarous as to rake into the Ashes of the Dead then? If Selfish and Haughty were but here, what d'ye think they would say?

Freem. Those are two special Sparks indeed, Who will allow the Dead to have no Faults, and the Living to have no good Qualities. When Mr. *Oldham* was alive, those two Gentlemen would allow him to have neither Wit nor Genius, which none but Sots could deny him; and they have the impudence to be angry now, if a Man will not allow him to have had both Delicacy and a good Ear, which none but Blockheads can grant him. In *Horace*'s time, there were a sort of Gentlemen who were just the Reverse of these two: they would allow none to be past Censure but those who had been dead a hundred Years. *Horace*, to expose them, made use of a peculiar address. I may venture to shew the folly of our Sparks by the very same address, with a contrary application: Ours will allow none to be liable to Criticism but those who have been rotten long enough to have secur'd an Author in *Horace*'s time. You take it then for granted that an Author who has been dead this hundred Years is obnoxious to Censure?

Beaum. Yes, or else it would be barbarity to attack *Shakespear*, who has not been dead so long.

Freem. Well, then, suppose our Author has been dead a hundred Years wanting one?

Beaum. One Year can signifie nothing, and he is still obnoxious to Censure.

Freem. Very good, Sir.

Vtor permisso, caudæque pilos ut equinæ
Paulatim vello, & demo unum, demo etiam unum,
Dum cadat elusus ratione ruentis acervi,
Qui redit ad fastos, &c.

That is to say, Sir, I will do as if I were to pull off a Horses Tail: I will one by one substract the Years, till you confess your Errors; for I will oblige you to one of these two things, either to confess that the Dead are not to be attack'd at all (and so there can be scarce any Criticism) or else to fix upon the particular Year when they begin to be liable. And I think you'll own that to fix upon that would be ridiculous enough in all Conscience.

Beaum. But pray, what should be the reason that all Men exclaim so against arraigning those who have been lately dead, if they have any Opinion of them?

Freem. One reason may be that the shewing them Faults which they could not find out themselves upbraids them with want of discernment, and disturbs their good Opinion of themselves: And another which is stronger is this, that they have a secret fear of being thus arraigned in their turns.

Beaum. But People can with some Patience hear of the Faults of those who have been long since dead. What should be the meaning of that?

Freem. The meaning is plain: For how few are those who think of being remembred a hundred Years after they are dead?

Beaum. Yet all this while you have forgot to name a Copy of Verses which may be allow'd to be more perfect

than those which you have just condemn'd. Come, name them, Sir.

Freem. You must excuse me, Sir.

Beaum. Nay, prithee let 's hear.

Freem.

Then hear, O hear, in what exalted Strains
Sicilian *Muses, thro' these happy Plains,*
Proclaim Saturnian *Times, our own* Apollo *Reigns.*

Beaum. So Mr. *Dryden*, I perceive, is oblig'd to you.

Freem. Not a jot oblig'd: For art thou such an Ass to think that I commend another Man's Verses for the Author's sake?

Beaum. For whose, then, pray?

Freem. For my own most certainly, that I may pass for a Man of Judgment.

Beaum. Well, tho' thou art a vain Dog, yet every vain Dog would not have made this honest Confession. But when shall we come to the Main Point? This has been a long Prelude. Faith, let us 'en Print this Conference, and give it the Title of *The Preamble*, as a worthy Author in King *Charles* the Second's time entituled his Book *The Preface.*

Freem. However, Chance has not so unhappily thrown us upon this Method; for you being prepossess'd with the reasonableness of Mr. *Rymer*'s Design, the shewing you his Errors in two or three things that are of less importance may go some way towards the removing your prejudices and the preparing you to hear Truth when we come to the principal matter.

Enter Freeman's *Boy.*

Boy. Sir, a Gentleman below would speak with you.

Freem. I beg your Pardon for a moment. There lies *Dacier* upon the Table; you may divert yourself with him till I return.

DIALOGUE IV

Beaumont, Freeman.

Freem. SO I have now got loose, and have secur'd us against more interruption.

Beaum. Now, then, let me hear your Objections to Mr. *Rymer*'s Design; for nothing can seem more commendable to me than his intention, which is to restore Tragedy to its primitive purity, by re-establishing the Ancient Method and reviving the Rules of *Aristotle.*

Freem. I am for observing the Rules of *Aristotle* as much as any Man living, as far as it can be done without re-establishing the Ancient Method. But because the Ancients Tragedies had little Love in them, that therefore ours must have little too,—because the Ancient Tragedies had a Chorus, that therefore we must ridiculously ape them,—this is what I cannot endure to hear of.

Beaum. But why ridiculously ape them? Mr. *Rymer* pretends that the Chorus is necessary; nay, that it is always the most necessary part of a Tragedy; that the *French* have lately seen the necessity of it, and that the success of their last Plays has sufficiently justified the Wisdom of their late Reformation.

Freem. 'Tis very inexcusable in a Man of Sence to make any conclusion from success. The *French* before now have damn'd a very good Play, and consequently may like an ill one. *J'ay veu,* says St. *Euremont, Corneille perdre sa Reputation* (*s'il etoit possible qu'il la perdit*) *à la representation de l'une de ses meilleures pieces. I have seen,* says he, Corneille *lose his Reputation* (*if it had been possible for him to lose it*) *at the acting of one of his best Plays.* Which he speaks to condemn the changable Relish of the *Parisians.* Nor is it true that the *French* saw any necessity

for the restoring the Chorus. Monsieur *Racine*, in his Preface to *Esther*, which was the first Tragedy that has been lately writ with a Chorus, says, That he was put upon the handling that Subject in that Method by those who had the Superintendency of the House of St. *Cyr*, that is, by Madam *de Maintenon*. So that what Mr. *R*—— calls a necessity was but at the best a conveniency.

Beaum. A conveniency!

Freem. Aye, for upon the Writing this Religious Play with a Chorus, the cloister'd Beauties of that blooming Society had a favourable occasion of shewing their Parts in a Religious way to the *French* Court.

Beaum. Let me die, if thou hast not been reading the scandalous Chronicle.

Freem. Many an honest well-meaning Text has met with a wicked Comment.

Beaum. But what does it signifie, whether the *French* found the Chorus necessary or only found it convenient? Mr. *Rymer*, whom all the World allows to be a competent Judge of these matters, not only affirms it to be necessary, but the most necessary part of a Tragedy.

Freem. That it is not the most necessary part of a Tragedy, I shall prove by an Argument, which, if Mr. *Rymer* admits of *Aristotle*'s Rules, will amount to a demonstration. For Tragedy, according to *Aristotle*, is the imitation of an Important Action. Now an Action may be imitated without the Chorus, but not without the Episode.

Beaum. What is it that you call Episode?

Freem. All that was between the singing of the Chorus, which is all our Modern Tragedy. But further, Fable is the very Soul of Tragedy, according to Mr. *Rymer* himself. Now nothing is more plain than this, that the Fable in Tragedy may subsist without the Chorus, but not without the Episode: From whence it necessarily follows that the Episode is always the most necessary part of a Tragedy;

for without it Tragedy can have no Soul, and consequently can have no Being.

Beaum. This, I must confess, is something.

Freem. Something? Well, to compleat your Conviction, I shall add the Authority of *Dacier*, who has these words in his Comment upon *Aristotle*'s Treatise of Poetry, *Chap.* 12, *Sect.* 6:

La Tragedie n'étoit dans son origine q'un chœur sans acteurs. Ensuite on ajoûta les acteurs pour délasser le chœur, & tout ce que ces acteurs disoient entre deux chants du chœur s'appelloit Episode, comme qui diroit partie ajoûtée; parce que ces recits étoient pieces étrangeres & surajoûtées à une ceremonie dont elles ne faisoient point partie; mais quand la Tragedie eut commencé à se former, & que les recits qui n'étoient que la partie accessoire furent devenus le principal, alors, &c.

So that it is plain, according to the Sence of *Dacier*, that tho' the Chorus was at first the Foundation of Tragedy, it is now the least necessary part of it.

Beaum. Well, you seem to have prov'd that the Chorus is not the most necessary part of a Tragedy, however it may be necessary and therefore ought to be restor'd. Mr. *Rymer* affirms particularly that it is necessary to confine a Poet to unity of place.

Freem. There he is so far mistaken that Monsieur *Racine*, who in several of his former Tragedies has with Religion observ'd that unity, has not tied himself to it so scrupulously in the very first Tragedy which he writ with a Chorus, which he owns himself in his Preface to *Esther*, and is plain to any one who reads that Tragedy. And whereas Mr. *R*—— affirms that the Chorus is not to be lost out of sight, let him but consult the First Scene of the Second Act of *Esther* and the Seventh Scene of the Third Act of *Athaliah* (which is the Second Play that *Racine* writ with a Chorus), and he will find that in those Scenes the Stage is without a Chorus.

Beaum. But has not *Racine* in that deviated from the ways of the Ancients?

Freem. I must confess I believe he has; for having lately read over the *Oedipus* and *Antigone* of *Sophocles*, I find that in those two Plays the Chorus is always in sight. However, this may serve as an Argument to prove two things. First, That if a Poet will be irregular, he may as well break the unity of place with a Chorus as without it. Secondly, It may prove that *Racine* undertook to write his *Esther* purely out of compliance with Madam *de Maintenon*. For if he had done it with a design of conforming to the Ancients, he would doubtless have conformed in every thing; but he has been so far from doing that, that his *Esther*, you know, has but Three Acts, which is directly contrary to the Precept of *Horace*,—

> *Neve minor neu sit quinto productior actu*
> *Fabula*,——

And to the Practice of the Ancients.

Beaum. Why, as far as I can remember, *Sophocles* and *Euripides* never distinguish'd their Plays by Acts.

Freem. They did not make use of the word Act to denote their Distinctions, as the *Romans* afterwards did; but however, the Chorus sung four times in the intervals of the Episode, as the Musick plays four times in the Intervals of the Acts with us.

Beaum. You affirm, then, that the Chorus is necessary upon no account.

Freem. I cannot conceive how the Chorus can be necessary, if Tragedy can attain its end without it. Now the end of Tragedy, according to *Aristotle*, is to excite Compassion and Terrour, in order to the purging of those and the like Passions. And Terrour and Compassion may be excited without a Chorus, perhaps better than with it.

Beaum. Pray, why so?

Freem. Because the Chorus in some measure must calm an Audience which the Episode disturb'd by its Sublimity and by its Pathetick; and therefore he who makes use of a Chorus in Tragedy seems to me to do like a Physitian, who, prescribing a Dose for the evacuation of Peccant Humors, should afterwards order Restringents to be taken in the midst of its kind Operation. The Song of the Chorus must be forreign from the matter or pertinent: If forreign from the matter, it must not only calm the Mind in some measure, but take it off from the subject. But if it is never so pertinent, it must very much cool a Reader, if not a Spectator, tho' I make no question but it must have the same effect upon both.

Beaum. But you ought to prove that it must have the same effect upon both.

Freem. If it has not, it must be wholly unprofitable; for the design of the Chorus is to give good Advice, to preach up Morality, to extol Vertue, to praise or pray to the Gods.

> *Ille bonis faveatque & consilietur amicis,*
> *Et regat iratos & amet peccare timentes;*
> *Ille dapes laudet mensæ brevis, ille salubrem*
> *Justitiam legesque & apertis otia portis;*
> *Ille tegat commissa, deosque precetur & oret*
> *Ut redeat miseris, abeat fortuna superbis.*
>
> Horat. Art. Poet.

Now I would fain know how an Audience that is extreamly disturbed with Terrour or with Compassion can be capable of harkning to good Advice, of apprehending the reasonableness of good Instruction, or of performing Religious Duties.

Beaum. But pray, if Terrour and Compassion must be rais'd to such a height without receiving any check, how can they be said to be purg'd?

Freem. Dacier has given us a very sensible account of that. For as the Humors in some distemper'd Body

are rais'd, in order to the evacuating that which is redundant or peccant in them, so Tragedy excites Compassion and Terrour to the same end: For the Play being over, an Audience becomes serene again, and is less apt to be mov'd at the common Accidents of Life, after it has seen the deplorable Calamities of Hero's and Sovereign Princes.

Beaum. Now here have I an Objection to make, which must be confess'd to be of some importance. *Aristotle* has given Rules for the Chorus, which he would not have done, unless he had believ'd it necessary. *Horace* has follow'd his steps. *Dacier*, who is *Aristotle*'s best Interpreter, has endeavour'd its restoration. He has declar'd the necessity of it for teaching Morality to the People; he has told us that *Racine* was convinc'd that there was a necessity for it; and he has commended him for reviving it in his last Tragedies.

Freem. But pray, Sir, how came you to know what *Dacier* says. I thought you had told me you had not convers'd with the Criticks lately.

Beaum. I read this in *Dacier*'s Preface but now when you left me alone.

Freem. Indeed, it must be confess'd that *Aristotle* has mention'd the Chorus, and discours'd of the different parts of it. But then consider how large a space the Chorus took up in the ancient Tragedy, and how little *Aristotle* has said of it, and you will be oblig'd to own that he slighted it, and would have made no mention of it if he could have avoided it; but he could not do that, being engaged to treat of the whole Art of the Stage. Nor could he in prudence condemn the use of it, if you consider that it was Religious in its Office and Institution. The same Answer will serve for *Horace*, because his Religion and Design were the same with *Aristotle*'s. *Dacier* shall answer himself: For if he declares a Chorus to be necessary in

his Preface, he tells you in his Comment upon the Sixth Chapter of *Aristotle* that he scarce believes it to be natural, and that having several times wonder'd how so delicate and so ingenious a People as the *Athenians* must be allow'd to be could think it agreeable to Nature or Probability that a Chorus who represented the Spectators of a Tragical Action should sing and dance upon such extraordinary and moving Events, he was oblig'd to attribute it to the Inclinations and Superstition of the *Greeks*, who, as they were the People of the World the most inclin'd to Singing and Dancing (which natural bent of theirs was fortified by Education), so were they the most bigotted of all Nations; and Singing and Dancing, which help'd to constitute the Ceremonials of their Religion, were held as Sacred by them, and of Divine Institution: So that when *Dacier*, who tells us in his Comment upon the Sixth Chapter that he could not have believ'd the Chorus natural, if it had not been so adapted to the Superstition and Musical Temper of the *Greeks*, declares it to be necessary in his Preface, he must do it out of belief that his own Country-men were as airy Bigots as the *Greeks*.

Beaum. And, Faith, he was very much in the right of it. How many *French*-men have we seen, who between the First and Second Courses have risen from Table, and danc'd to their own damn'd Voices? I must confess they do not dance at Church, but they have several apish Gesticulations there, which one may easily mistake for Dancing, and which are as entertaining to the full. But for Singing, it is both their Diversion and Duty.

Freem. Well, then, all this considered, it is no wonder that *Dacier* should tell us, That *Racine*, being to write upon a Religious Subject, saw a necessity for a Chorus, that is, for a great deal of Singing and Dancing; for without it there had been two inconveniences: First, The Religion

of the Stage had been more free from Superstition than that of the Altar. And, Secondly, a Play had been more insipid than High Mass.

Beaum. Yet *Dacier* has given us two Reasons for the necessity of a Chorus that have nothing to do with *Racine*: For a Chorus, says he, is necessary, First, To deliver Moral Sentiments to the People; And, Secondly, To reflect upon what is vicious and commendable in the Characters of the primary Actors; in which he is certainly in the right. Now, the Chorus being retrench'd from our Modern Tragedy, Morality must be retrench'd at the same time. For the principal Actors, being shaken by violent Passions, cannot be made sentencious; for Sentences require Reflection, and that requires Serenity, at least some degree of Serenity. How then can our Theatre, the Chorus being retrench'd, be said to be the School of Virtue? Or how can any one be the better for Modern Tragedy?

Freem. Our Theatre may be said to be the School of Vertue upon two accounts. First, because it removes the greatest Obstructions to Vertue, by reducing the Passions to a just mediocrity from their violence and irregularity. And Secondly, because it teaches some Moral Doctrine by the Fable, which must always be allegorical and universal.

Beaum. This Answer is something satisfactory. But what can you answer to the Second pretended necessity for restoring the Chorus,—which is, that the Stage may be furnish'd with Persons who may commend or blame any thing that may be vicious or excellent in the Characters of the primary Actors? For there may be a necessity sometimes for their speaking prophanely and impiously, which may be of dangerous consequence, without the Reflections of the Chorus.

Freem. Nothing that is said can be of pernicious conse-

quence in a Tragedy, if it is writ as it ought to be. That is, if it is what *Horace* calls *Fabula recte morata.*

Beaum. Pray what may that be?

Freem. A Tragedy is *Fabula recte morata,* in which the Manners are well painted: So that every Actor discovers immediately, by what he says, his Inclinations, his Designs, and the very Bottom of his Character; then if any thing is said impiously, an Audience not only knows that it is spoken by an impious Man, but by one that is upon the Point of being punish'd for his Impiety.

Beaum. This seems to be sensible enough. But now good Sence requires that we should think of our Dinner; for a hungry Sophister, who disputes at the time he may eat, does but defraud his own Genius to put a cheat upon another Man's Reason. Therefore, let's to the Cock, and I'll send for *Jack Wild* to make a third Man, who shall very dogmatically tell you that there can be no Tragedy without a Chorus.

Freem. But can he prove it?

Beaum. That you shall judge when you have heard him.

Freem. Well, I'll follow you.

DIALOGUE V

Beaumont, Freeman.

Scene, Freeman's *Chamber, after Dinner.*

Beaum. WAS ever any Man mawl'd as thou hast been! *Jack Wild* has handled you as you deserv'd, I' faith. Thou wert quite bafled, quite run down, Man!

Freem. Bafled and run down? Good! Are we in *Bow-street,* or on the *Bank-side*? Your Mr. *Wild* has an admirable Talent for running People down, I confess.

But dost not thou know that the silliest thing that a Man can do is to speak Sence in some Company? Is it not a greater sign of Judgment to hold one's Tongue than to talk Reason to People who cannot hear it?

Beaum. Then you do not believe he was in the right, it seems?

Freem. I am not quite so credulous. I must confess Mr. *Wild* had got *Dacier* without Book perfectly, nay, and that very place in *Dacier* which pleads most strongly for a Chorus. But then he would admit of no Answer. I would advise Mr. *Wild* to take Orders; a Pulpit sure is the only place where Impertinence has priviledge to be tedious without interruption. But thou wert as attentive as any Fanatical Bigot at a Conventicle; therefore, if you can recollect his Reasons, I dare undertake to convince you of their insufficiency.

Beaum. Faith, I'll try; but then you shall engage that if I happen to shew such a plaguy Memory, I shall not lose my Reputation of a Wit with you.

Freem. That I do readily engage for, I' faith.

Beaum. So, then, his first Argument was this: Tragedy is the imitation of a Publick and Visible Action, therefore there ought to be a Chorus.

Freem. I must confess *Dacier* affirms, That Tragedy must be the Representation of a Publick and Visible Action; but *Aristotle* says no such thing that I know of.

Beaum. But common Sence, tho', says so. For if an Action is not publickly visible, how can it be seen by such a numerous multitude?

Freem. How can an Action, the Scene of which is in *Greece*, be seen by us here in *England*?

Beaum. Nay, I will grant you that there is an occasion for us to give way to a wholsome delusion, if we design to receive either delight or profit from the *Drama*. But, however, a Poet is still to endeavour that his Representa-

tion be attended with as much probability as it is capable of: And it is much easier for a thousand Spectators to imagine themselves in some open place, either at *Mycenæ* or *Thebes*, than to imagine themselves in a King's Cabinet in either of those two places.

Freem. I must confess what you say appears to be reasonable, but how do you infer from hence that there ought to be a Chorus?

Beaum. The Action of a Tragedy being publickly visible, and acted by Persons of the most exalted Ranks, it is impossible but that there must be People besides the Actors interested in the principal Action, upon which Action the Fortune of those People must in some measure depend.

Freem. And these People, you'll tell me, are to constitute the Chorus.

Beaum. Right.

Freem. This, I must confess, is according to *Dacier*, but his Doctrine is neither warranted by *Aristotle* nor always by the Practice of the Ancients; for it does not appear to me, for example, what dependance, as to their Fortunes, the Chorus in the *Electra* of *Sophocles* has upon the principal Actors. But suppose we had Charity to grant that it is impossible for a grave and important Action to be acted in publick by great Men, but others must intermeddle in it: Can *Dacier* infer from hence that these People thus concerned ought to sing and dance at their Princes Sufferings? I will grant it probable that at the Sufferings of Kings several should be concern'd; at the same time you must grant it absurd that they should sing and dance at their Sufferings. Now, would you have a Poet shew a thing that's absurd to shew something else that is probable, when the probability may be suppos'd as well as shewn, or shewn without an absurdity?

Beaum. How can that be?

Freem. In our modern Tragedies as well as the ancient, there are several concern'd besides the Actors; I mean, besides the primary Actors (for the Chorus was an Actor in the old Tragedy, and spoke like a Jury by its Foreman); but they have some better reason for their being concern'd than purely their itch of medling, nor do they express their concern in a way which is contrary to all Decorum. But I could give you an example of a Chorus, where the singing is not only absurd and unnatural, but destructive of the Poet's design.

Beaum. That example I should be glad to hear.

Freem. 'Tis the Chorus at the end of the First Act in the *Electra* of *Sophocles.*

Beaum. How does that which is sung by the Chorus there run counter to the design of the Poet?

Freem. I will, in as few words as I can, give you the Fable of that Tragedy. *Clytemnestra*, with her Adulterer *Ægystus*, assassinates her Husband *Agamemnon*, but her Son *Orestes*, by means of his Sister *Electra*, escapes; after a long absence from *Mycenæ*, he arrives secretly with *Pylades* and his Governour, surprizes *Clytemnestra* and her Adulterer, and revenges the Death of his Father. The Scene opens with the Arrival of *Orestes* before the Royal Palace of *Mycenæ* at Break of Day, where they find *Electra* lamenting her sad Condition. The Chorus advise her not to be so loud, least she should be heard by *Ægystus*; yet as soon as ever she is gone, they grow infinitely louder, and in a Consort of Fifteen Voices threaten Ruine to *Clytemnestra* and her Adulterer. 'Tis true, they were told that *Ægystus* was not in the Palace; but they knew very well that *Clytemnestra* was there, and that *Ægystus* would be with her that very day. Now this coming after an unlucky Dream, which *Clytemnestra* look'd on as ominous,—which Dream is mentioned by this very Chorus,– This Song must in all reason alarm

Clytemnestra, and prevent the surprize which is design'd by the Poet. Besides, how did this Chorus dare thus loudly and publickly to condemn *Clytemnestra* before her own Palace, at the very time that she had the Sovereign Power in her hands?

Beaum. I must confess I am not able to give any Answer to this.

Freem. I could shew you another gross absurdity in that very Tragedy, which is purely occasion'd by the Chorus. But pray go on to the next Argument.

Beaum. I would fain know first what the other absurdity is: a digression sometimes is as much worth the while as the main matter, and I have always been pleas'd to hear of the Errors of any extraordinary Man, because it has still been the best support to me, under the mortifying Sence which I have of my own Infirmities.

Freem. The absurdity which I speak of is the discovery that *Orestes* makes of himself and his design to *Electra* in the Fourth Act of that Tragedy, which he does in the presence of the Chorus; so that he entrusts a Secret, upon which his Empire and Life depends, in the hands of Sixteen Women. For *Orestes* had no Friends on whose assistance he might rely, unless it were his Friend and his Governour, and consequently he had nothing to depend upon but Secresie and Surprize and a swift Execution.

Beaum. Has *Dacier*, in his late Comment upon *Electra*, taken no notice of those two mistakes?

Freem. He has taken no notice at all of the first, which I was extremely surpriz'd at: For that Error seems to me apparently to shock common Sence. I must confess he has taken notice of the last, because he thought he could make a defence for it. But he has done it after such a manner that I am sorry that a Man of Monsieur *Dacier*'s Merit should talk at so poor a rate.

Beaum. At how poor a rate?

Freem. I have considered that passage enough to give you the *English* of it *Verbatim.* There are several Persons, says he, of extraordinary Merit, who cannot endure to see Plots and Contrivances against the Lives of Princes in the presence of a Chorus, pretending that this cannot be probable, nay, that it cannot be natural. But these People, says he, ought to reflect upon the Conditions that are necessary to qualifie a Chorus rightly. The Chorus ought to be interested in the Action as much as the principal Persons; they ought to be animated by the same Spirit, and all their happiness ought to depend upon their Secrecy and their Fidelity. And when a Chorus is thus qualify'd, there is nothing which may not be said before it without any violation to probability. And then it is as natural to see a Conspiracy concerted before it as it is to behold a number of Conspirators closely consulting in some secure Retirement. The Chorus of *Electra* is of this nature, says he.

Beaum. And is it?

Freem. Monsieur *Dacier* may imagine what he pleases, but there is nothing that the Chorus or *Electra* says, that may induce a Man to believe that the fortune of the first depends upon the success of the last. But supposing it did, can any Man who has common Sence believe that a Prince as discreet as *Orestes* is represented by *Sophocles* should entrust a Secret, upon which his Empire and Life depended, with fifteen Women, only upon the recommendation of his Sister, whose discretion he had no reason to have any mighty Opinion of? But this has been a long digression; therefore pray proceed to the next Argument which Mr. *Wild* brought for a Chorus.

Beaum. A Tragedy, said he, is the imitation of an Action, which must be one and entire; and therefore there must be a Chorus: For without it the Acts can

never be joyn'd, there will be a solution of continuity, and Tragedy can never be one entire Body. Pray, what can you answer to this ?

Freem. This, I must confess, is the Bugbear Argument ; but we shall do well enough with it. Then Mr. *Wild* and you fancy that the Action breaks off every time that the Musick plays between the Acts ?

Beaum. That is Mr. *Wild*'s Opinion.

Freem. But then I could tell you that the Action is suppos'd to be continued behind the Scenes.

Beaum. How can an Audience be sure of that ? Or when the Stage is left empty upon the end of the First Act, what grounds has a Company to believe the Actors will return ? What grounds, I say, can they have but Custom, which is but a ridiculous Security at the best, and can be none at all to one who sees a Tragedy acted the first time ? Whereas a Chorus naturally keeps the Company together, till the return of the principal Actors.

Freem. But sure I should think that an Audience between the Acts should have a much better Security for the return of the Actors than Custom, and that is from the nature of Tragedy, which is the imitation of an entire action ; that is, of an Action which has a beginning, a middle, and an end. Now this beginning and middle are, according to *Aristotle*, Things that necessarily suppose something to follow.

Beaum. When you talk at this rate, you suppose that every one who sees a Tragedy understands the Rules of *Aristotle*.

Freem. The Rules of *Aristotle* are nothing but Nature and Good Sence reduc'd to a Method. I may very well suppose that every one who goes to see a Tragedy acted goes with a hope that he shall not see something absurd, and that he has common Sence to know that a Tragedy would be very absurd which should conclude

abruptly before the just end of the Action; that is to say, before that part of it which necessarily supposes nothing to follow it.

Beaum. You say the Song of the Chorus is very absurd and unnatural; but are not the Fiddles between the Acts a great deal more absurd and unnatural? A Poet in a Tragick Imitation is always to have an eye to probability. But is it probable that *Oedipus*, or any other Prince, should four times in the height and fury of his Passion leave the Scene of Action purely to give leave to a Company of Musitians to divert the Spectators four times, least they should be too much shaken by the progress of the terrible Action? Would not such a one be a merry Monarch, a very complaisant Wretch?

Freem. Has not *Dacier* reason to be asham'd of this empty Sophistry, which may so easily be retorted upon himself? For would it not be as ridiculous to make a King leave the Scene of the Action four times, only to give way to the People who compose the Chorus? Any Man knows that in Plays which have a Chorus, and in Plays which have none, 'tis the necessity of the Action which makes the Actors leave the Stage. For an Actor never leaves the Stage in a Tragedy which is writ as it should be but when he has business in another place. But suppose I should grant you that the Fiddles are more absurd than a Chorus, we do not pretend that our Musick makes a part of Tragedy, as you pretend that the Chorus does, and if there must be an absurdity, it had better been in Ornament than in Essentials.

Beaum. But if your Musick does not make a part of the Modern Tragedy, how can it be said to be one body, when the parts of it are not united?

Freem. 'Tis not the tagging of the Acts with a Chorus that properly makes a Tragedy one Body, but the Unity of the Action; and for my part, I cannot conceive but

that the Parts are sufficiently united when the Action has a Beginning, a Middle, and an End, which have a mutual, necessary, and immediate dependance. But if it should be granted to *Dacier* that the Fiddles between the Acts are absolutely destructive of the Unity of the Poem, he could never infer from it that there ought to be a Chorus, when the mischief may be prevented another way.

Beaum. What way is that?

Freem. Why, by not dividing Tragedy into Acts at all.

Beaum. But several Inconveniences would follow from thence.

Freem. I will easily grant it; but any inconvenience ought to be admitted rather than that grand absurdity, a Chorus. For Poetry being an imitation of Nature, any thing which is unnatural strikes at the very Root and Being of it, and ought to be avoided like Ruine.

Beaum. Well, thou hast here taken a great deal of pains to prove that we ought not to re-establish the Chorus; but you promis'd to shew me that we ought not to banish Love neither.

Freem. I have now an appointment which I am oblig'd to keep touch with. But when we next meet, I will not only engage to demonstrate that to you, but to shew you that, contrary to Mr. *Rymer*'s assertion, *Shakespear* was a great Genius.

Beaum. I shall be very glad, if you perform what you say. But prithee tell me, before we part, your Opinion of Mr. *Rymer*'s Judgment of our *English* Comedies.

Freem. Never was there a more righteous Decree. We have particularly a Comedy which was writ by a Gentleman now living, that has more Wit and Spirit than *Plautus* without any of his little contemptible Affectations, and which, with the Urbanity of *Terence*, has the Comick force which the Great *Cæsar* requir'd in him.

Beaum. What Comedy can that be?

Freem. What indeed can it be but the *Plain Dealer*?

Beaum. I find, then, that you do not dissent from Mr. *R*—— in every thing.

Freem. No, I should be very sorry if I should do that; for his Censures of *Shakespear* in most of the particulars are very sensible and very just. But it does not follow, because *Shakespear* has Faults, that therefore he has no Beauties, as the next time we meet I shall shew you.

Beaum. Well, till then, your Servant.

Freem. Honest *Ned*, Adieu.

CHARLES GILDON

VINDICATION OF PARADISE LOST

1694

To Mr. T. S. *in Vindication of Mr.* Milton's *Paradise lost.*

SIR,

YOU will pardon me, I am confident, tho' in Opposition to your Thoughts I positively declare my self extreamly well pleas'd with that part of Mr. *Milton*'s most excellent Poem, to which you discover the least Inclination. Those *Antient* and consequently *less Intelligible* Words, Phrases, and Similies, by which he frequently and *purposedly* affects to express his Meaning, in my Opinion do well suit with the *Venerable Antiquity* and *Sublime Grandeur* of his Subject. And how much soever some *Unthinking* have Condemn'd this his Choice, *You*, who have Maturely weigh'd how much deeper an Impression *less us'd* (so they be what you will grant his always are) *Significant words* make on a *Readers* fancy than such as are *more common*,—you, I say, must pay a vast deference to Mr. *Milton*'s great *Judiciousness* in this particular no less than to his *entire Manage* of every part of that *Charming Poem*, in which upon every Occasion he discovers himself a perfect, unimitable *Master of Language*. Here are you forc'd to give a profound Attention to the *Universal Creator*, speaking like *that Almighty* who by the *Fiat* of his Mouth made all things, and yet so *Gracious* are All his *Expressions*, as if he valued himself more on his *Good Will to Man* than on his *Prerogative* over him. There shall you read *Man*, addressing himself *Submissively* like a *Creature* who owes his Being to a better,

wiser, and higher power, and yet not so *Abjectly* but you will easily perceive him to be *Lord* of the whole Creation. *Elsewhere* you may see an *Angel* discovering himself not a Little *Man's Superior* by Creation, in *Place* and *Power* more, but in *Knowledge* most of all. In *another place*, behold *Woman* appearing *Inferiour* to both these, and yet more *Ambitious* than either, but then *softer* much in her *Make* and *Manners* than her *rougher Spouse*, whom *down right Sincerity* and unaffected plainness seem mostly to Delight. Nor can I now forget with what *vast complacency* we have oft together read the most *Natural, Lively*, yet (as their Sexes) different Descriptions our first *Parents* separately make of their own Apprehensions of themselves at their *first finding* themselves *Living Creatures*. Nay, the very *fallen Angels* are much Honour'd above the best of their deserts by the *Amazing Relation* we there meet with of their *Ambition, Malice, Inveteracy*, and *Cunning*; and never was *Scene* so livelily shown as that of his *Pandæmonium* in the first Book. Once more, and you are no less astonisht at his *Description* than he makes the *Angels* to be at the Report of their Adversaries Thund'ring Fireworks. And yet, if his Matter requires a *Meaner Style*, how much soever he speaks *Loftily* at one time, at another he does even to a *Miracle* suit his *Speech* to his *Subject*. This, I well know, has been rashly or maliciously censur'd in him for *Servile creeping*; but if 'tis well *consider'd* upon what *proper Occasion* he thus *humbles* his Style, 'twill be *Accounted* (as really it is) his *Great Commendation*. But in praise of Mr. *Milton*'s admirable Dexterity in this his *Matchless Performance*, since All I can say must come exceeding short of his *due Merit*, that I bring not my self under the Correction of that known saying, *Præstat de Carthagine tacere quam pauca dicere*, I shall venture to add no more but this: tho' the Composing such a *compleat Poem* on such a no less *Obscure* than *weighty* Subject was a *Task*

to be perform'd by Mr. *Milton* only, yet 'tis not out of doubt whether *himself* had ever been able so to Sing of *Unrevealed Heavenly Mysteries,* had he not been altogether depriv'd of his *Outward Sight,* and thereby made capable of such *continued Strenuous Inward Speculations* as he who has the use of his *Bodily Eyes* cannot possibly become possest with. *This,* however, must be Granted as indubitably true: The *bountiful Powers* above did more than make him amends for their taking away his Sight, by so *Illumining* his Mind as to enable him *most compleatly* to sing of *Matchless Beings, Matchless Things,* before *unknown* to, and even *unthought* of, by the whole Race of Men, thus rewarding him for a *Temporary Loss* with an *Eternal Fame,* of which *Envy* it self shall not be able ever to deprive this *best of Poems* or its most *Judicious Author.*

In this Faith I Subscribe my self,
SIR,
Yours, &c., I. I.

WILLIAM WOTTON

FROM *REFLECTIONS UPON ANCIENT AND MODERN LEARNING*

1694

CHAP. III.

Of Ancient and Modern Eloquence and Poesie.

IT is acknowledged by most Men, that he who has studied any Subject is a better Judge of that Subject than another Man who did never purposely bend his Thoughts that way, provided they be both Men of equal Parts. Yet we see there are many Things whereof Men will, at first sight, pass their Judgment, and obstinately adhere to it, though they not only know nothing of those Matters, but will confess that it requires Parts, and Skill, and Exercise, to be excellent in them. This is remarkably visible in the Censures which are passed upon Pieces of Oratory and Poesie every Day by those who have very little, or none, of that sort of Learning themselves, and to whom all that is said of Skill in those Things, and of a true Relish of what is really fine, is Jargon and Cant. And in the mean time these Men do in other Things shew great Accuracy and Judgment, even in Subjects which require quick Apprehension, nice Observation, and frequent Meditation. If one should ask why such Men so frequently mistake and differ in those other Matters, the Answer, I think, is this: (1) The Foundations of Eloquence of all sorts lying in Common Sence, of which every Man is in some degree a Master, most ingenious

Men have, without any Study, a little Insight into these Things. This little Insight betrays them immediately to declare their Opinions, because they are afraid, if they should not, their Reputation would be in danger. On the contrary, where the Subject is such that every Man finds he can frame no *Idea* of it in his own Mind without a great number of Premises which cannot be attained by common Conversation, all wise Men hold their Hands, suspect their own Abilities, and are afraid that they cannot fathom the Depth of his Knowledge with whom they converse, especially if he has a Name for Skill in those Matters. And therefore, talk with such Men of a Law-Case or a Problem in Geometry, if they never studied those Things, they will frankly tell you so, and decline to give their Opinion. Whereas if you speak to them of a Poem, a Play, or a Moral Discourse upon a Subject capable of Rhetorical Ornaments, they will immediately pass their Censure, right or wrong; and Twenty Men, perhaps, shall give Twenty different Opinions; whilst, in the other Cases, scarce Two of the Twenty shall disagree, if they are conscious to themselves that they have Skill enough to judge without another's help. (2) In most of these Things our Passions are some Way or other concerned; at least, being accustomed to have them moved, we expect it, and think our selves disappointed when our Expectation is deceived. Now, when a Man is to judge in Matters of this kind, he generally beforehand is pre-possessed with such Passions as he would willingly have raised or confirmed, and so speaks as his Expectation is answered. But when our Passions do not move in these Matters, as they seldom do upon Subjects a great way off, then our Censures are more unanimous. For, as the Poet says,

> *Securus licet Æneam Rutulumque ferocem*
> *Committas; nulli gravis est percussus Achilles.*

So that there is no great Wonder why Men should receive the Writings of the Ancients with so great Respect: For the Distance of Time takes off Envy, and the being accustomed from our Childhood to hear them commended creates a Reverence. Yet though due Allowances ought to be made for these Pre-possessions, one has Reason to believe that this Reverence for the Ancient Orators and Poets is more than Prejudice. (By Orators I understand all those Writers in Prose who took pains to beautifie and adorn their Stile.) Their Works give us a very solid Pleasure when we read them. The best in their kind among the Moderns have been those who have read the Ancients with greatest Care and endeavoured to imitate them with the greatest Accuracy. The Masters of Writing in all these several Ways to this Day appeal to the Ancients as their Guides, and still fetch Rules from them for the Art of Writing. *Homer*, and *Aristotle*, and *Virgil*, and *Horace*, and *Ovid*, and *Terence* are now studied as Teachers, not barely out of Curiosity, by Modern Poets. So likewise are *Demosthenes*, *Aristotle*, *Tully*, *Quinctilian*, and *Longinus*, by those who would write finely in Prose. So that there is Reason to think that in these Arts the Ancients may have out-done the Moderns; though neither have they been neglected in these later Ages, in which we have seen extraordinary Productions, which the Ancients themselves, had they been alive, would not have been ashamed of.

If this be so, as I verily believe it is, sure now (it will be objected), It is evident that the Ancients had a greater Force of Genius than the Moderns can pretend to. Will it be urged that here also they had an Advantage, by being born first? Have these Arts a fixed Foundation in Nature, or were they not attained to by Study? If by Nature, why have we heard of no Orators among the Inhabitants of the Bay of *Soldania*, or eminent Poets in *Peru*? If by Study,

why not now, as well as formerly, since Printing has made Learning cheap and easie? Does it seem harder to speak and write like *Cicero* or *Virgil* than to find out the motions of the Heavens and to calculate the Distances of the Stars? What can be the Reason of this Disparity?

The Reasons are several, and scarce one of them of such a Nature as can now be helped, and yet not conclusive against the Comparative Strength of Understanding evidently discernible in the Productions of the Learned Men of the present and immediately foregoing Ages, to which I would be understood strictly to confine my Notion of the Word *Modern*. These Reasons I shall examine at large, because, if they are valid, they quite take away the Force of Sir *William Temple*'s Hypothesis, and by removing the blind Admiration now paid to the Ancient Orators and Poets, set it upon such a Foot as will render the Reading of their Books more useful, because less superstitious. They are of several Sorts, some relating to Oratory, some to Poesie, and some in common to both.

I shall first speak of those which relate more particularly to Poetry, because it was much the ancientest Way of Writing in *Greece*, where their Orators owned that they learned a great deal of what they knew, even in their own as well as in other Parts of Learning, from their Poets. And here one may observe, that no Poetry can be Charming that has not a Language to support it. The *Greek* Tongue has a vast variety of long Words, wherein long and short Syllables are agreeably intermixed together, with great Numbers of Vowels and Diphthongs in the Middle-Syllables, and those very seldom clogged by the joyning of harsh-sounding Consonants in the same Syllable: All which Things give it a vast Advantage above any other Language that has ever yet been cultivated by Learned Men. By this Means all manner of Tunable Numbers may be formed in it with Ease, as still appears in the remaining *Dramatick*

and *Lyrick* Composures of the *Greek* Poets. This seems to have been at first a lucky Accident, since it is as visible in *Homer* (who lived before the Grammarians had determined the Analogy of that Language by Rules, which Rules were in a very great measure taken from his Poems as the Standard) as in those Poets that came after him. And that this peculiar Smoothness of the *Greek* Language was at first Accidental, farther appears, because the *Phœnician* or *Hebrew* Tongue, from whence it was formed, as most Learned Men agree, is a rough, unpolished Tongue, abounding with short Words and harsh Consonants: So that if one allows for some very small Agreement in the Numbers of Nouns and Variations of Tenses in Verbs, the two Languages are wholly of a different Make. That a derived Language should be sweeter than its Mother-Tongue will seem strange to none that compares the Modern *Tuscan* with the Ancient *Latin*; where, though their Affinity is visible at first Sight in every Sentence, yet one sees that that derived Language actually has a Sweetness and Tunableness in its Composition that could not be derived from its Parent, since nothing can impart that to another which it has not it self: And it shows likewise, that a Barbarous People, as the *Italians* were when mingled with the *Goths* and *Lombards*, may, without knowing or minding Grammatical Analogy, form a Language so very musical that no Art can mend it. For, in *Boccace*'s Time, who lived above 300 Years ago, in the earliest Dawnings of Polite Learning in these Western Parts of the World, *Italian* was a formed Language, endued with that peculiar Smoothness which other *European* Languages wanted; and it has since suffered no fundamental Alterations; not any, at least, for the better, since in the *Dictionary* of the Academy *della Crusca*, *Boccace*'s Writings are often appealed to in doubtful Cases which concern the Niceties of the Tongue.

Now, when this Native Smoothness of the *Greek* Tongue was once discovered to common Ears by the sweetness of their Verses, which depended upon a Regular Composition of Long and Short Syllables, all Men paid great Respect to their Poets, who gave them so delightful an Entertainment. The wiser Sort took this Opportunity of Civilizing the rest, by putting all their Theological and Philosophical Instructions into Verse, which, being learnt with Pleasure and remembred with Ease, helped to heighten and preserve the Veneration already upon other Scores paid to their Poets. This increased the Number of Rivals; and every one striving to out-do his Neighbour, some by varying their Numbers, others by chusing Subjects likely to please, here and there some, one or two at least of a sort, proved excellent: And then those who were the most extraordinary in their several Ways were esteemed as Standards by succeeding Ages, and Rules were framed by their Works to examine other Poems of the same sort. Thus *Aristotle* framed Rules of *Epick* Poesie from *Homer*. Thus *Aristophanes*, *Menander*, *Sophocles*, and *Euripides* were looked upon as Masters in *Dramatick* Poesie, and their Practice was sufficient Authority. Thus *Mimnermus*, *Philetas*, and *Callimachus* were the Patterns to following Imitators for *Elegy* and *Epigram*. Now, Poetry being a limited Art, and these Men, after the often-repeated Trials of others had proved successless, finding the true Secret of pleasing their Country-men, partly by their Wit and Sence, and partly by the inimitable Sweetness of their Numbers, there is no Wonder that their Successors, who were to write to a pre-possessed Audience, though otherwise Men of equal, perhaps greater Parts, failed of that Applause of which the great Masters were already in possession; for Copying nauseates more in Poetry than any thing: So that *Buchanan* and *Sannazarius*, tho' admirable Poets, are not read with that Pleasure which

Men find in *Lucretius* and *Virgil*, by any but their Countrymen, because they wrote in a dead Language, and so were frequently obliged to use the same Turns of Thought, and always the same Words and Phrases, in the same Sense in which they were used before by the Original Authors; which forces their Readers too often to look back upon their Masters, and so abates of that Pleasure which Men take in *Milton*, *Cowley*, *Butler*, or *Dryden*, who wrote in their Mother-Tongue, and so were able to give that unconstrained Range and Turn to their Thoughts and Expressions that are truly necessary to make a compleat Poem.

It may therefore be very reasonably believed, that the natural Softness, Expressiveness, and Fulness of the *Greek* Language gave great Encouragement to the *Greek* Poets to labour hard, when they had such manageable Matter to work upon, and when such Rewards constantly attended their Labours. This likewise was a great Help to their Orators as well as their Poets; who soon found the Beauties of a numerous Composition, and left nothing undone that could bring it to its utmost Perfection. But this was not so important a Consideration as alone to have encouraged the *Greeks* to cultivate their Eloquence, if the Constitution of their Governments had not made it necessary, and that Necessity had not obliged a very great Number of ingenious Men to take Pains about it.

Most part of Greece, properly so called, and of *Asia the Less*, the Coasts of *Thrace*, *Sicily*, the Islands in the *Mediterranean*, and a great part of *Italy* were long divided into great Numbers of Kingdoms and Commonwealths; and many of these small Kingdoms, taking Example by their neighbouring Cities that had thrown off their imperious Masters, turned in time to Commonwealths as well as they. These, as all little Governments that are contiguous, being well nigh an even Match for each other, continued for many Ages in that Condition. Many of the

chiefest were Democracies, as the Republicks of *Athens, Syracuse, Thebes,* and *Corinth,* where it was necessary to complement the People upon all Occasions: So that busie, factious Men had Opportunities enough to shew their Skill in Politicks. Men of all Tempers and all Designs, that would accuse or defend, that would advise or consult, were obliged to address themselves in set Harangues to the People. Interest, therefore, and Vanity, Motives sometimes equally powerful, made the Study of Rhetorick necessary; and whilst every Man followed the several Bias of his own Genius, some few found out the true Secret of Pleasing in all the several Ways of Speaking well, which are so admirably and so largely discoursed of by the ancient Rhetoricians. *Demosthenes* being esteemed beyond all his Predecessors for the Correctness of his Stile, the Justness of his Figures, the Easiness of his Narrations, and the Force of his Thoughts, his Orations were looked upon as Standards of Eloquence by his Country-men: Which Notion of theirs effectually damped future Endeavours of other Men, since here, as well as in Poetry and Painting, all Copiers will ever continue on this side of their Originals. And besides, the great End of Oratory being to persuade, wherein Regard must be had to the Audience as well as to the Subject, if there be but one Way of doing best at the same time in both, as there can be but one in all limited Arts or Sciences, they that either first find it out or come the nearest to it will unquestionably, and of Right, keep the first Station in Men's Esteem, though perhaps they dare not, for fear of disgusting the Age they live in, follow those Methods which they admire so much and so justly in those great Masters that went before them.

That these Accidents, and not a particular Force of Genius, raised the *Grecian* Poesie and Oratory, will further appear, if we reflect upon the History of the Rise

and Increase of both those Arts amongst the *Romans*. Their Learning as well as their Language came originally from *Greece*; they saw what was done to their Hands, and *Greek* was a living Language; and so, by the help of Masters, they could judge of all its Beauties. Yet, with all their Care and Skill and Pains, they could not of a long time bring their Poetry to any Smoothness; they found that their Language was not so ductile; they owned it, and complained of it. It had a Majestick Gravity, derived from the People themselves who spoke it, which made it proper for Philosophical and Epical Poems; for which Reason *Lucretius* and *Virgil* were able to do so great Things in their several Ways, their Language enabling them to give the most becoming Beauties to all their Thoughts. But there not being that Variety of Feet in the *Latin*, which Language for the most part abounds in *Dactyles*, *Spondees*, and *Trochees*, nor that Sprightliness of Temper and in-bred Gaiety in the *Romans* which the *Greeks* are to this Day famous for, even to a Proverb,—in many Parts of Poetry they yielded, though not without Reluctancy, to a People whom they themselves had conquered. Which shews that Natural Imperfections cannot be overcome: And when these Imperfections are accidental, as the Language is which every Man speaks at first, though he has equal Parts and perhaps greater Industry, yet he shall be thrown behind another Man who does not labour under those Inconveniences; and the Distance between them will be greater or less, according to the Greatness or Quality of these Inconveniences.

If we bring this Thing down to Modern Languages, we shall find them labouring under much greater. For the Quantities of Syllables being in a manner lost in all Modern Languages, we can have no Notion of that Variety of Feet which was anciently used by the *Greeks* and *Romans*, in Modern Poems. The Guide of Verses is

not now Length of Syllable, but only Number of Feet and Accent. Most of the *French* Accents are in the last Syllable; Ours, and the *Italian*, in the fore-going. This fits *French* for some sorts of Poems which *Italian* and *English* are not so proper for. Again, All Syllables, except the Accented one in each Word, being now common in Modern Languages, we Northern People often make a Syllable short that has two or three Consonants in it, because we abound in Consonants. This makes *English* more unfit for some Poems than *French* and *Italian*, which, having fewer Consonants, have consequently a greater Smoothness and Flowingness of Feet and Rapidity of Pronunciation.

I have brought these Instances out of Modern Languages, whereof Sir *William Temple* is so great a Master, to prove my first Assertion; namely, That though a very great deal is to be given to the Genius and Judgment of the Poet, which are both absolutely necessary to make a good Poem, what Tongue soever the Poet writes in, yet the Language it self has so great an Influence, that if *Homer* and *Virgil* had been *Polanders* or *High-Dutch*-Men, they would never in all probability have thought it worth their while to attempt the Writing of Heroick Poems; *Virgil* especially,[a] who began to write an Historical Poem of some great Actions of his Country-men, but was so gravelled with the Roughness of the *Roman* Names that he laid it aside.

[a] *Cum res Romanas inchoasset, offensus materiâ & nominum asperitate, ad Bucolica transiit.* — Donatus in Vitâ Virgilii.

Now, as the *Roman* Poetry arrived to that Perfection which it had, because it was supported by a Language which, though in some Things inferiour to the *Greek*, had noble and charming Beauties not now to be found in Modern Languages, so the *Roman* Oratory was owing to their Government: Which makes the Parallel much more perfect: And all those Reasons alledged already for the

Growth of the *Attick* Eloquence are equally applicable to the History of the *Roman*, so that there is no Necessity of Repeating them. To which we may add, That when the *Romans* once lost their Liberty, their Eloquence soon fell: And *Tacitus* or *Quinctilian* needed not have gone so far about to search for Reasons of the Decay of the *Roman* Eloquence. *Tully* left his Country and Profession after his Defence of *S. Roscius Amerinus*, resolving to give over Pleading, if *Sylla*'s Death had not restored that Freedom which only gave Life to his Oratory: And when the Civil Wars between *Pompey* and *Cæsar* came on, he retired, because his Profession was superseded by a rougher Rhetorick, which commands an Attentive Audience in all Countries where it pleads.

When Orators are no longer Constituent Parts of a Government, or, at least, when Eloquence is not an almost certain Step to arrive at the chiefest Honours in a State, the Necessity of the Art of Speaking is in a great measure taken off; and as the Authority of Orators lessens, which it will insensibly do as Tyranny and Absolute Power prevail, their Art will dwindle into Declamation, and an Affectation of Sentences and Forms of Wit. The Old Men who out-live their former Splendor will perhaps set their own Scholars and Auditors right, and give them a true Relish of what is Great and Noble; but that will hardly continue above one or two Generations. Which may be super-added as another Reason why there were no more *Demosthenes's* or *Tullies*, after the *Macedonian* and *Roman* Emperors had taken away the Liberty of their respective Commonwealths. It is Liberty alone which inspires Men with Lofty Thoughts, and elevates their Souls to a higher Pitch than Rules of Art can direct. Books of Rhetorick make Men Copious and Methodical; but they alone can never infuse that true Enthusiastick Rage which Liberty breaths into their Souls who enjoy it:

And which, guided by a Sedate Judgment, will carry Men further than the greatest Industry and the quickest Parts can go without it.

When private Members of a Commonwealth can have Foreign Princes for their Clients, and plead their Causes before their Fellow-Citizens; when Men have their Understandings enlarged by a long Use of publick Business for many Years before they speak in publick; and when they know that their Auditory are Men, not only of equal Parts and Experience in Business, but also many of them Men of equal, if not greater Skill in Rhetorick than themselves,—Which was the Case of the old *Romans*,—These Men, inflamed with the mighty Honour of being Patrons to Crowned Heads, having Liberty to speak any Thing that may advantage their Cause, and being obliged to take so great Pains to get up to, or to keep above so many Rivals, must needs be much more excellent Orators, than other Ages, destitute of such concurrent Circumstances, though every thing else be equal, can possibly produce.

Besides all this, the Humour of the Age which we live in is exceedingly altered. Men apprehend or suspect a Trick in every Thing that is said to move the Passions of the Auditory in Courts of Judicature or in the *Parliament-House*. They think themselves affronted when such Methods are used in Speaking, as if the Orator could suppose within himself that they were to be catched by such Baits. And therefore, when Men have spoken to the Point, in as few Words as the Matter will bear, it is expected they should hold their Tongues. Even in the Pulpit, the Pomp of Rhetorick is not always commended; and very few meet with Applause who do not confine themselves to speak with the Severity of a Philosopher as well as with the Splendour of an Orator,—two Things not always consistent. What a Difference in the Way of Thinking must this needs create in the World! Anciently,

Orators made their Employment the Work of their whole Lives, and as such they followed it. All their Studies, even in other Things, were by a sort of Alchemy turned into Eloquence. The Labour which they thought requisite is evident to any Man that reads *Quinctilian*'s *Institutions* and the Rhetorical Tracts of *Cicero*. This exceedingly takes off the Wonder. Eloquence may lie in common for Ancients and Moderns, yet those only shall be most excellent that cultivate it most, who live in an Age that is accustomed to, and will bear nothing but Masculine, unaffected Sence, which likewise must be cloathed with the most splendid Ornaments of Rhetorick.

Sir *William Temple* will certainly agree with me in this Conclusion, that former Ages made greater Orators and nobler Poets than these later Ages have done, though perhaps he may disagree with me about the Way by which I came to my Conclusion; since hence it will follow, that the present Age, with the same Advantages, under the same Circumstances, might produce a *Demosthenes*, a *Cicero*, a *Horace*, or a *Virgil*; which, for any thing hitherto said to the contrary, seems to be very probable.

But though the Art of Speaking, assisted by all these Advantages, seems to have been at a greater heighth amongst the *Greeks* and *Romans* than it is at present, yet it will not follow from thence that every Thing which is capable of Rhetorical Ornaments should for that sole Reason be more perfect anciently than now; especially if these be only Secondary Beauties, without which that Discourse wherein they are found may be justly valuable, and that in a very high Degree. So that, though for the purpose one should allow the Ancient Historians to be better Orators than the Modern, yet these last may for all that be much better, at least equally good, Historians; those among them, especially, who have taken fitting Care to please the Ears, as well as instruct the Understandings,

of their Readers. Of all the Ancient Historians before *Polybius*, none seems to have had a right Notion of writing History, except *Thucydides*: And therefore *Polybius*, whose first Aim was to instruct his Reader by leading him into every Place whither the Thread of his Narrative carried him, makes frequent Excuses for those Digressions, which were but just necessary to beget a thorough Understanding of the Matter of Fact of which he was then giving an Account. These Excuses show that he took a new Method, and they answer an Objection which might otherwise have been raised from the small Numbers of extant Histories that were written before his Time; as if we could make no Judgment of those that are lost from those that are preserved. For the Generality of those who wrote before him made Rhetorick their chief Aim; and therefore all Niceties of Time, and Place, and Person, that might hurt the Flowingness of their Stile, were omitted; instead whereof the Great Men of their *Drama's* were introduced making long Speeches; and such a Gloss was put upon every Thing that was told as made it appear extraordinary; and Things that were wonderful and prodigious were mentioned with a particular Emphasis.

This Censure will not appear unjust to any Man who has read Ancient Historians with ordinary Care, *Polybius* especially: Who, first of all the Ancient Historians, fixes the Time of every great Action that he mentions: Who assigns such Reasons for all Events as seem, even at this distance, neither too great nor too little: Who in Military Matters takes Care, not only to shew his own Skill, but to make his Reader a Judge as well as himself: Who in Civil Affairs makes his Judgment of the Conduct of every People from the several Constitutions of their respective Governments, or from the Characters and Circumstances of the Actors themselves: And last of all, Who scrupulously avoids saying any Thing that might appear incredible to Posterity,

but represents Things in such a manner as a wise Man may believe they were transacted: And yet he has neglected all that Artful Eloquence which was before so much in fashion.

If these therefore be the chiefest Perfections of a just History, and if they can only be the Effects of a great Genius and great Study, or both,—at least, not of the last without the first,—we are next to enquire whether any of the Moderns have been able to attain to them: And then, if several may be found which in none of these Excellencies seem to yield to the noblest of all the Ancient Histories, it will not be difficult to give an Answer to Sir *William Temple*'s Question [a], *Whether* D'Avila's *and* Strada's *Histories be beyond those of* Herodotus *and* Livy? I shall name but two, *The Memoirs of* Philip Comines, and F. Paul's *History of the Council of* Trent. [a] Pag. 100.

Philip Comines ought here to be mentioned for many Reasons; For, besides that he particularly excels in those very Vertues which are so remarkable in *Polybius*, to whom *Lipsius* makes no Scruple to compare him, he had nothing to help him but Strength of Genius, assisted by Observation and Experience. He owns himself that he had no Learning, and it is evident to any Man that reads his Writings. He flourished in a barbarous Age, and died just as Learning had crossed the *Alpes* to get into *France*: So that he could not, by Conversation with Scholars, have those Defects which Learning cures supplied. This is what cannot be said of the *Thucydides*'s, *Polybius*'s, *Sallusts*, *Livies*, and *Tacitus*'s of Antiquity. Yet with all these Disadvantages,—to which this great one ought also to be added, That by the Monkish Books then in vogue he might sooner be led out of the Way than if he had none at all to peruse,—his Stile is Masculine and significant; though diffuse, yet not tedious; even his Repetitions, which are not over-frequent, are diverting. His Digressions are wise, proper, and

instructing. One sees a profound Knowledge of Mankind in every Observation that he makes, and that without Ill Nature, Pride, or Passion: Not to mention that peculiar Air of Impartiality which runs through the whole Work, so that it is not easie to withdraw our Assent from every Thing which he says. To all which I need not add that his History never tires, though immediately read after *Livy* or *Tacitus*.

In *F. Paul*'s History one may also find the Excellencies before observed in *Polybius*; and it has been nicely examined by dextrous and skilful Adversaries, who have taken the Pains to weigh every Period and rectifie every Date. So that, beside the Satisfaction which any other admirable History would have afforded us, we have the Pleasure of thinking that we may safely rely upon his Accounts of Things, without being mis-guided in any one leading Particular of great moment, since Adversaries who had no Inclination to spare him could not invalidate the Authority of a Book which they had so great a Desire to lessen. I had gone no further than *D'Avila* and *Strada*, if there were as much Reason to believe their Narratives as there is to commend their Skill in writing. *D'Avila* must be acknowledged to be a most Entertaining Historian, one that wants neither Art, Genius, nor Eloquence to render his History acceptable. *Strada* imitates the old *Romans* so happily, that those who can relish their Eloquence will be always pleased with his.

Upon the whole Matter one may positively say, That where any Thing wherein Oratory can only claim a Share has been equally cultivated by the Moderns as by the Ancients, they have equalled them at least, if not out-done them, setting aside any particular Graces which might as well be owing to the Languages in which they wrote as to the Writers themselves.

CHAP. IV.

Reflections upon Monsieur Perrault's *Hypothesis, That Modern Orators and Poets are more excellent than Ancient.*

WHATEVER becomes of the Reasons given in the last Chapter for the Excellency of Ancient Eloquence and Poetry, the Position it self is so generally held that I do not fear any Opposition here at home. It is almost an Heresie in Wit among our Poets to set up any Modern Name against *Homer* or *Virgil*, *Horace* or *Terence*. So that though here and there one should in Discourse preferr the present Age, yet scarce any Man who sets a Value upon his own Reputation will venture to assert it in Print. Whether this is to be attributed to their Judgment or Modesty, or both, I will not determine; though I am apt to believe to both, because in our Neighbour-Nation, which is remarkable for a good deal of what Sir *William Temple* calls *Sufficiency*, some have spoken much more openly.

For the Members of the Academy in *France*, who since the Cardinal *de Richelieu*'s Time have taken so much Pains to make their Language capable of all those Beauties which they find in Ancient Authors, will not allow me to go so far as I have done. Monsieur *Perrault*, their Advocate, in Oratory sets the Bishop of *Meaux* against *Pericles*, or rather *Thucydides*, the Bishop of *Nismes* against *Isocrates*, *F. Bourdaloüe* against *Lysias*, Monsieur *Voiture* against *Pliny*, and Monsieur *Balzac* against *Cicero*. In Poetry, likewise, he sets Monsieur *Boileau* against *Horace*, Monsieur *Corneille* and Monsieur *Moliere* against the Ancient *Dramatick* Poets. In short, though he owns that some amongst the Ancients had very exalted Genius's, so that it may perhaps be very hard to find any Thing that comes near the Force of some of the Ancient Pieces in either Kind amongst our Modern Writers, yet he affirms

that Poetry and Oratory are now at a greater heighth than ever they were, because there have been many Rules found out since *Virgil*'s and *Horace*'s Time, and the old Rules likewise have been more carefully scanned than ever they were before. This Hypothesis ought a little to be enquired into; and therefore I shall offer some few Considerations about his Notion. Sir *William Temple*, I am sure, will not think this a Digression, because the Author *of the* Plurality of Worlds,[a] *by censuring of the Old Poetry and giving Preference to the New, raised his Indignation, which no Quality among Men was so apt to raise in him as Sufficiency, the worst Composition out of the Pride and Ignorance of Mankind.*

[a] Pag. 71.

1. Monsieur *Perrault* takes it for granted that *Cicero* was a better Orator than *Demosthenes*; because, living after him, the World had gone on for above Two Hundred Years constantly improving and adding new Observations necessary to compleat his Art: And so by Consequence, that the Gentlemen of the Academy must out-do *Tully* for the same Reasons. This Proposition, which is the Foundation of a great part of his Book, is not very easie to be proved; because Mankind loves Variety in those Things wherein it may be had so much that the best Things, constantly re-iterated, will certainly disgust. Sometimes the Age will not bear Subjects upon which an Orator may display his full Force; he may often be obliged to little, mean Exercises. A Thousand Accidents, not discoverable at a distance, may force Men to stretch their Inventions to spoil that Eloquence which, left to it self, would do admirable Things. And that there is such a Thing as a Decay of Eloquence in After-Ages, which have the Performances of those that went before constantly to recurr to, and which may be supposed to pretend to Skill and Fineness, is evident from the Writings of *Seneca* and the Younger *Pliny*, compared with *Tully*'s.

2. The Ancients cannot justly be accused of not using an exact and artificial Method in their Orations, if one examines *Tully*'s *Pleadings* or reads over *Quinctilian*'s *Institutions*. And if Panegyricks and Funeral-Orations do not seem so regular, it is not because Method was little understood, but because in those Discourses it was not so necessary. Where Men were to reason severely, Method was strictly observed: And the Vertues discoursed upon in *Tully*'s *Offices* are as judiciously and clearly digested under their proper Heads, as the Subject-Matter of most Discourses written by any Modern Author upon any Subject whatsoever. And it does not seem possible to contrive any Poem whose Parts can have a truer or more artful Connexion than *Virgil*'s *Æneis*: And though it is now objected by Monsieur *Perrault* as a Fault, that he did not carry on his Poem to the Marriage of *Æneas* and *Lavinia*, yet we may reasonably think that he had very good Reasons for doing so; because, in *Augustus*'s Court, where Matters of that sort were very well understood, it was received with as great Veneration as it has been since, and never needed the Recommendation of Antiquity to add to its Authority.

Nay, we can give very probable Reasons at this distance for it. It is a Fault in Heroick Poetry to fetch Things from their first Originals: And to carry the Thread of the Narrative down to the last Event is altogether as dull. As *Homer* begins not with the Rape of *Helen*, so he does not go so far as the Destruction of *Troy*. Men should rise from Table with some Appetite remaining: And a Poem should leave some View of something to follow, and not quite shut the Scenes; especially if the remaining Part of the Story be not capable of much Ornament, nor affords a Variety. The Passion of Love, with those that always follow upon its being disappointed, had been shown already in the Story of *Dido*. But Monsieur *Perrault* seems to have had his Head possessed with the *Idea* of *French*

Romances, which, to be sure, must never fail to end in a general Wedding.

For I observe, *Secondly,* That among other Arguments produced by him to prove that the Ancients did not perfect their Oratory and Poesie, he urges this: That the Mind of Man being an inexhaustible Fund of new Thoughts and Projects, every Age added Observations of its own to the former Store; so that they still increased in Politeness, and by Consequence their Eloquence of all sorts, in Verse or Prose, must needs be more exact. And as a Proof of this Assertion, he instances in Matters of Love; wherein the Writings of the best bred Gentlemen of all Antiquity, for want of Modern Gallantry, of which they had no Notion, were rude and unpolished, if compared with the Poems and Romances of the present Age. Here Monsieur *Perrault*'s Skill in Architecture seems to have deceived him: For there is a wide Difference between an Art that, having no Antecedent Foundation in Nature, owes its first Original to some particular Invention, and all its future Improvements to Superstructures raised by other Men upon that first Ground-work; and between Passions of the Mind that are Congenial with our Natures, where Conversation will polish them, even without previous Intentions of doing so, and where the Experiences of a few Ages, if assisted by Books that may preserve particular Cases, will carry them to as great an Heighth as the Things themselves are capable of. And therefore he that now examines the Writings of the Ancient Moral Philosophers — *Aristotle,* for instance, or the *Stoicks*—will find that they made as nice Distinctions in all Matters relating to Vertue and Vice, and that they understood Humane Nature, with all its Passions and Appetites, as accurately as any Philosophers have done since. Besides, It may be justly questioned whether what Monsieur *Perrault* calls *Politeness* be not very often rather an Aberration from, and Straining of

Nature, than an Improvement of the Manners of the Age: If so, it may reasonably be supposed that those that medled not with the Niceties of Ceremony and Breeding, before unpractised, rather contemned them as improper or unnatural than omitted them because of the Roughness of the Manners of the Ages in which they lived. *Ovid* and *Tibullus* knew what Love was in its tenderest Motions; they describe its Anxieties and Disappointments in a Manner that raises too too many Passions, even in unconcerned Hearts; they omit no probable Arts of Courtship and Address; and keeping the Mark they aim at still in view, they rather chuse to shew their Passion than their Wit: And therefore they are not so formal as the Heroes in *Pharamond* or *Cassandra*, who, by pretending to Exactness in all their Methods, commit greater Improbabilities than *Amadis de Gaule* himself. In short, *Durfe*,[a] and *Calprenede*,[b] and the rest of them, by over-straining the String, have broke it: And one can as soon believe that *Varillas* and *Maimbourg* wrote the Histories of great Actions just as they were done, as that Men ever made Love in such a Way as these *Love-and-Honour Men* describe. That Simplicity therefore of the Ancients, which Monsieur *Perrault* undervalues, is so far from being a Mark of Rudeness and Want of Complaisance, that their Fault lay in being too Natural, in making too lively Descriptions of Things, where Men want no Foreign Assistance to help them to form their *Idea's*, and where Ignorance, could it be had, is more valuable than any, much more than a Critical, Knowledge.

[a] *The Author of* Astræa.

[b] *The Author of* Cleopatra

3. Since,

> *By that lowd Trumpet which our Courage aids,*
> *We learn that Sound as well as Sense persuades,*

the Felicity of a manageable Language, when improved by Men of nice Ears and true Judgments, is greater, and goes further to make Men Orators and Poets, than Monsieur *Perrault* seems willing to allow; though there is a plain

Reason for his Unwillingness: The *French* Language wants Strength to temper and support its Smoothness for the nobler Parts of Poesie, and perhaps of Oratory too, though the *French* Nation wants no Accomplishments necessary to make a Poet or an Orator. Therefore their late Criticks are always setting Rules, and telling Men what must be done and what omitted, if they would be Poets. What they find they cannot do themselves shall be so clogged, where they may have the Management, that others shall be afraid to attempt it. They are too fond of their Language to acknowledge where the Fault lies; and therefore the chief Thing they tell us is that Sence, Connexion, and Method are the principal Things to be minded. Accordingly, they have translated most of the Ancient Poets, even the *Lyricks*, into *French* Prose; and from those Translations they pass their Judgments, and call upon others to do so too. So that when (to use Sir *J. Denham*'s Comparison) by pouring the Spirits of the Ancient Poetry from one Bottle into another, they have lost the most Volatile Parts, and the rest becomes flat and insipid, these Criticks exclaim against the Ancients, as if they did not sufficiently understand Poetical Chymistry. This is so great a Truth that even in Oratory it holds, though in a less Degree. *Thucydides* therefore has hard Measure to be compared with the Bishop of *Meaux*, when his Oration is turned into another Language, whilst Monsieur *de Meaux*'s stands unaltered; for though Sence is Sence in every Tongue, yet all Languages have a peculiar Way of expressing the same Things, which is lost in Translations, and much more in Monsieur *D'Ablancourt*'s, who professed to mind two very different Things at once,—to translate his Author, and to write elegant Books in his own Language, which last he has certainly done; and he knew that more Persons could find fault with his Stile, if it had been faulty, than find out Mistakes in his Rendring of the *Greek* of

Thucydides. Besides, the Beauty of the Author's Composition is in all Translations entirely lost, though the Ancients were superstitiously exact about it, and in their elegant Prose as much almost as in their Verse. So that a Man can have but half an *Idea* of the ancient Eloquence, and that not always faithful, who judges of it without such a Skill in *Greek* and *Latin* as can enable him to read Histories, Orations, and Poems in those Languages with Ease and Pleasure. But it is time to return to my Subject.

CHAP. V.

Of Ancient and Modern Grammar.

GRAMMAR is one of the Sciences which Sir *William Temple* says that[a] *no Man ever disputed with the Ancients.*

[a] Pag. 93

As this Assertion is expressed, it is a little ambiguous. It may be understood of the Skill of the Moderns in the Grammatical Analogy of *Latin* and *Greek* or of their Skill in the *Grammar* of their Mother-Tongues. Besides, *Grammar* may either be considered *Mechanically* or *Philosophically.* Those consider it *Mechanically* who only examine the Idiotisms and Proprieties of every particular Language, and lay down Rules to teach them to others. Those consider it as *Philosophers* who run over the several Steps by which every Language has altered its *Idiom*, who enquire into the several Perfections and Imperfections of those Tongues with which they are acquainted, and (if they are living Languages) propose Methods how to remedy them, or at least remove those Obscurities which are thereby occasioned in such Discourses where Truth is only regarded, and not Eloquence.

Now, this *Mechanical Grammar* of *Greek* and *Latin* has been very carefully studied by Modern Criticks. *Sanctius*,

Scioppius, and *Gerhard Vossius*, besides a great Number of others who have occasionally shown their Skill in their Illustrations of Ancient Authors, have given evident Proofs how well they understood the *Latin* Tongue: So have *Caninius*, *Clenard*, and abundance more, in *Greek*: Wherein they have gone upon sure Grounds, since, besides a great Number of Books in both Languages upon other Subjects, abundance of Grammatical Treatises, such as *Scholia upon difficult Authors*, *Glossaries*, *Onomasticons*, *Etymologicons*, *Rudiments of Grammar*, *&c.*, have been preserved, and published by skilful Men (most of them at least) with great Care and Accuracy. So that there is Reason to believe that some Modern Criticks may have understood the Grammatical Construction of *Latin* as well as *Varro* or *Cæsar*, and of *Greek* as well as *Aristarchus* or *Herodian*. But this cannot be pretended to be a new Invention, for the *Grammar* of dead Languages can be only learned by Books: And since their Analogy can neither be increased nor diminished, it must be left as we find it.

So that when Sir *William Temple* says, *That no Man ever disputed Grammar with the Ancients*, if he means that we cannot make a new Grammar of a dead Language, whose Analogy has been determined almost Two Thousand Years, it is what can admit of no Dispute. But if he means that Modern Languages have not been Grammatically examined, at least not with that Care that some Ancient Tongues have been, that is a Proposition which may perhaps be very justly questioned. For, in the first place, it ought to be considered that every Tongue has its own peculiar Form as well as its proper Words, not communicable to, nor to be regulated by the Analogy of another Language: Wherefore he is the best Grammarian who is the perfectest Master of the Analogy of the Language which he is about, and gives the truest Rules by which another Man may learn it. Next, To apply this to our own Tongue, it may be certainly

affirmed that the *Grammar* of *English* is so far our own that Skill in the Learned Languages is not necessary to comprehend it. *Ben. Johnson* was the first Man that I know of that did any Thing considerable in it; but *Lilly*'s *Grammar* was his Pattern; and for want of Reflecting upon the Grounds of a Language which he understood as well as any Man of his Age, he drew it by Violence to a dead Language that was of a quite different Make, and so left his Work imperfect. After him came Dr. *Wallis*, who examined the *English* Tongue like a Grammarian and a Philosopher at once, and showed great Skill in that Business: And of his *English Grammar* one may venture to say, That it may be set against any Thing that is extant of the Ancients of that kind: For, as Sir *William Temple* says upon another Occasion, there is *a Strain of Philosophy and curious Thought* in his previous *Essay of the Formation of the Sounds of Letters*, and of Subtility in the *Grammar*, in the reducing of our Language under Genuine Rules of Art, that one would not expect in a Book of that kind.

In *France*, since the Institution of the *French Academy*, the *Grammar* of their own Language has been studied with great Care. *Isocrates* himself could not be more nice in the Numbers of his Periods than these *Academicians* have been in setling the Phraseology, in fixing the Standard of Words, and in making their Sentences, as well as they could, numerous and flowing. Their *Dictionary*, of which a good Part is already printed, *Vaugelas*'s and *Bouhours*'s *Remarks upon the French Tongue*, *Richelet*'s and *Furetiere*'s *Dictionaries*, with abundance of other Books of that kind, which, though not all written by Members of the *Academy*, yet are all Imitations of the Patterns which they first set, are Evidences of this their Care. This Sir *William Temple* somewhere owns: And though he there supposes that these *Filers* and *Polishers* may have taken away a great part of the Strength of the Tongue, which in the main is true

enough, yet that is no Objection against their Critical Skill in *Grammar*, upon which Account only their Labours are here taken notice of. So much for the *Mechanical* Part of *Grammar*.

Philosophical Grammar was never that we know of much minded by the Ancients. So that any great Performances of this sort are to be looked upon as Modern Increases to the Commonwealth of Learning. The most considerable Book of that kind, that I know of, is Bishop *Wilkins*'s *Essay towards a Real Character and Philosophical Language*: A Work which thosewho have studied think they can never commend enough. To this one ought to add what may be found relating to the same Subject in the Third Book of Mr. *Lock*'s *Essay of Humane Understanding*.

SIR RICHARD BLACKMORE

PREFACE TO *PRINCE ARTHUR, AN HEROICK POEM*

1695

TO what ill purposes soever Poetry has been abus'd, its true and genuine End is, by universal Confession, the Instruction of our Minds and Regulation of our Manners, for which 'tis furnish'd with so many excellent Advantages. The Delicacy of its Strains, the Sweetness and Harmony of its Numbers, the lively and admirable manner of its Painting or Representation, and the wonderful Force of its Eloquence cannot but open the Passages to our Breasts, triumph over our Passions, and leave behind them very deep Impressions. 'Tis in the power of Poetry to insinuate into the inmost Recesses of the Mind, to touch any Spring that moves the Heart, to agitate the Soul with any sort of Affection, and transform it into any Shape or Posture it thinks fit. 'Tis therefore no wonder that so wise a State as that of *Athens* should retain the *Poets* on the side of *Religion* and the *Government.* The Stage there was set up to teach the People the Scheme of their *Religion* and those Modes of Worship the Government thought fit to encourage, to convey to them such Ideas of their Deities and Divine Providence as might engage their Minds to a Reverence of superiour, invisible Beings, and to observe and admire their Administration of humane Affairs. The *Poets* were look'd on as Divine, not only upon the account of that extraordinary Fury and Heat of Imagination wherewith they were thought to be inspir'd, but likewise upon the account of their Pro-

fession and Imployment, their Business being to represent *Vice* as the most odious, and *Virtue* as the most desirable thing in the World.

Tragedy was at its first Institution a part of the Ancient Pagans Divine Service, when the *Chorus*, which originally was so great a part, contain'd many excellent Lessons of *Piety* and *Morality*, and was wholly imploy'd in rectifying their mistakes about the *Gods* and their Government of the World, in moderating their Passions, and purging their Minds from Vice and Corruption. This was the noble Design of the *Chorus*. And the Representation of great and illustrious Characters, gradually afterwards introduc'd, their Impious or their Generous Actions, and the different Event that attended them, was to deter Men from Vice and Impiety, and encourage them to be Generous and Virtuous, by shewing them the Vengeance that at last overtook the one, and the Rewards and Praises that crown'd the other. The End of Comedy was the same, but pursu'd in another way,—The business of Comedy being to render Vice ridiculous, to expose it to publick Derision and Contempt, and to make Men asham'd of Vile and Sordid Actions.

Tragedy design'd to Scare Men, Comedy to Laugh them out of their Vices. And 'tis very plain that Satyr is intended for the same End, the Promotion of Virtue and exposing of Vice; which it pursues by sharp Reproaches, vehement and bitter Invectives, or by a Courtly but not less cutting Raillery. The Odes of the Lyric Poet were chiefly design'd for the Praises of their Gods, their Heroes and extraordinary Persons, to draw Men to an Admiration and Imitation of them.

But above all other kinds, *Epick Poetry*, as it is first in Dignity, so it mostly conduces to this End. In an Epick Poem, where Characters of the first Rank and Dignity, Illustrious for their Birth or high Employment, are introduc'd, the Fable, the Action, the particular Episodes are so

contriv'd and conducted, or at least ought to be, that either Fortitude, Wisdom, Piety, Moderation, Generosity, some or other Noble and Princely Virtues shall be recommended with the highest Advantage, and their contrary Vices made as odious. To give Men right and just Conceptions of *Religion* and *Virtue*, to aid their Reason in restraining their Exorbitant Appetites and Impetuous Passions, and to bring their Lives under the Rules and Guidance of true Wisdom, and thereby to promote the publick Good of Mankind, is undoubtedly the End of all Poetry.

'Tis true, indeed, that one End of Poetry is to give Men Pleasure and Delight; but this is but a subordinate, subaltern End, which is it self a Means to the *greater* and *ultimate* one before mention'd. A Poet should imploy all his Judgment and Wit, exhaust all the Riches of his Fancy, and abound in Beautiful and Noble Expression, to divert and entertain others; but then it must be with this Prospect, that he may hereby engage their Attention, insinuate more easily into their Minds, and more effectually convey to them wise Instructions. 'Tis below the Dignity of a true Poet to take his Aim at any inferiour End. They are Men of little Genius, of mean and poor Design, that imploy their Wit for no higher Purpose than to please the Imagination of vain and wanton People.

I think these Poets, if they must be called so, whose Wit, as they manage it, is altogether unuseful, are justly reproach'd; but I am sure those others are highly to be condemned, who use all their Wit in *Opposition* to Religion, and to the *Destruction* of Virtue and good Manners in the World. There have been in all Ages such ill Men that have perverted the right Use of Poetry, but never so many, or so *bold* or *mischievous*, as in ours. Our Poets seem engag'd in a general *Confederacy* to ruin the End of their own Art, to expose *Religion* and *Virtue*, and bring *Vice* and *Corruption of Manners* into Esteem and Reputation.

The Poets that write for the Stage (at least a great part of 'em) seem deeply concern'd in this *Conspiracy*. These are the *Champions* that charge *Religion* with such desperate Resolution, and have given it so many deep and ghastly Wounds. The Stage was an Outwork or Fort rais'd for the Protection and Security of the Temple; but the Poets that kept it have revolted and basely betray'd it, and, what is worse, have turn'd all their *Force* and discharg'd all their *Artillery* against the Place their Duty was to defend. If any Man thinks this an unjust Charge, I desire him to read any of our Modern Comedies, and I believe he will soon be convinc'd of the Truth of what I have said.

The *Man of Sense*, and the *Fine* Gentleman in the *Comedy*, who, as the chiefest Person propos'd to the Esteem and Imitation of the Audience, is enrich'd with all the Sense and Wit the Poet can bestow,—this *Extraordinary Person* you will find to be a *Derider* of Religion, a great *Admirer* of *Lucretius*, not so much for his *Learning* as his *Irreligion*, a Person wholly *Idle*, dissolv'd in Luxury, abandon'd to his Pleasures, a great Debaucher of Women, profuse and extravagant in his Expences; and, in short, this *Finish'd Gentleman* will appear a *Finish'd Libertine*.

The *Young Lady* that must support the Character of a *Vertuous, Well-manner'd, Sensible* Woman, the most perfect Creature that can be, and the very Flower of her Sex, this *Accomplish'd Person* entertains the Audience with confident Discourses, immodest Repartees, and prophane Raillery. She is throughly instructed in *Intreagues* and *Assignations*, a great *Scoffer* at the prudent Reservedness and Modesty of the best of her Sex. She despises the wise Instructions of her Parents or Guardians, is disobedient to their Authority, and at last, without their *Knowledge* or *Consent*, marries her self to the *Fine Gentleman* above mentioned. And can any one imagine but that our Young Ladies and Gentlemen are admirably instructed by *such Patterns* of *Sense* and

Virtue? If a Clergy-man be introduc'd, as he often is, 'tis seldome for any other purpose but to abuse him, to expose his very *Character* and *Profession*: He must be a *Pimp*, a *Blockhead*, a *Hypocrite;* some *wretched Figure* he must make, and almost ever be so manag'd as to bring his very *Order* into *Contempt*. This indeed is a very common, but yet so gross an Abuse of *Wit* as was never endur'd on a Pagan Theater, at least in the ancient, primitive Times of *Poetry*, before its *Purity* and *Simplicity* became corrupted with the Inventions of after Ages. *Poets* then taught Men to reverence their *Gods* and those who serv'd them. None had so little Regard for his *Religion* as to expose it publickly, or if any had, their Governments were too wise to suffer the Worship of their Gods to be treated on the *Stage* with *Contempt*.

In our *Comedies* the *Wives of Citizens* are highly encourag'd to despise their Husbands, and to make great Friendship with some such *Vertuous Gentleman* and *Man of Sense* as is above describ'd. This is their Way of recommending *Chastity* and *Fidelity*. And that *Diligence* and *Frugality* may be sufficiently expos'd,—tho' the two *Virtues* that chiefly support the *Being* of any State,—to deter Men from being *Industrious* and *Wealthy*, the *Diligent, Thriving* Citizen is made the most Wretched, Contemptible Thing in the World; and as the Alderman that makes the best *Figure* in the *City* makes the worst on the *Stage*, so under the Character of a *Justice of Peace* you have all the *Prudence* and *Virtues* of the *Country* most unmercifully insulted over.

And as these Characters are set up on purpose to ruin all Opinion and Esteem of Virtue, so the Conduct throughout, the *Language*, *the Fable*, and *Contrivance* seem evidently design'd for the same *Noble* End. There are few Fine Conceipts, few Strains of Wit, or extraordinary Pieces of Raillery, but are either *immodest* or *irreligious*, and very

few *Scenes* but have some *spiteful* and *envious* Stroke at Sobriety and Good Manners, whence the Youth of the Nation have apparently receiv'd very bad Impressions. The *universal* Corruption of Manners and irreligious Disposition of Mind that infects the Kingdom seems to have been in a great Measure deriv'd from the Stage, or has at least been highly promoted by it. And 'tis great Pitty that those in whose Power it is have not yet restrain'd the *Licentiousness* of it, and oblig'd the Writers to observe more *Decorum*. It were to be wish'd that Poets, as Preachers are in some Countries, were paid and licens'd by the State, and that none were suffer'd to write in Prejudice of *Religion* and the *Government*, but that all such Offenders, as *publick Enemies* of Mankind, should be silenc'd and duly punish'd. Sure some Effectual Care should be taken that these Men might not be suffer'd, by Debauching our Youth, to help on the *Destruction* of a brave Nation.

Some of these *Poets*, to excuse their Guilt, alledge for themselves that the *Degeneracy* of the *Age* makes their leud way of Writing necessary; they pretend the *Auditors* will not be pleas'd unless they are thus entertain'd from the Stage; and to please, they say, is the chief business of the Poet. But this is by no means a just Apology; 'tis not true, as was said before, that the Poet's chief business is to please. His chief business is to instruct, to make Mankind Wiser and Better; and in order to this, his Care should be to please and entertain the Audience with all the *Wit* and *Art* he is Master of. *Aristotle* and *Horace*, and all their *Criticks* and *Commentators*, all Men of Wit and Sense agree, that this is the End of Poetry. But they say 'tis their *Profession* to Write for the *Stage*, and that Poets must starve if they will not in this way humour the *Audience*. The *Theater* will be as *unfrequented* as the *Churches*, and the Poet and the

Parson *equally* neglected. Let the Poet then abandon his Profession, and take up some honest, lawful Calling, where, joyning Industry to his great Wit, he may soon get above the Complaints of *Poverty*, so common among these ingenious Men, and lye under no necessity of prostituting his Wit to any such *vile* Purposes as are here censur'd. This will be a course of Life more Profitable and Honourable to himself and more *useful* to others. And there are, among these *Writers*, some who think they might have risen to the highest *Dignities* in other Professions, had they imploy'd their Wit in those Ways. 'Tis a mighty Dishonour and Reproach to any Man that is capable of being useful to the World in any *Liberal* and *Virtuous* Profession, to lavish out his *Life* and *Wit* in propagating *Vice* and *Corruption of Manners*, and in battering from the Stage the strongest Entrenchments and best Works of *Religion* and *Virtue*. Whoever makes this his Choice, when the other was in his Power, may he go off the Stage unpity'd, *complaining* of *Neglect* and *Poverty*, the just Punishments of his *Irreligion* and *Folly*.

'Tis no dishonour to be a *true* Poet, if indeed a Man be one; that is, a noble *Genius* well cultivated, and employ'd in Writing in such a way as reaches the End of his Art, and by discouraging Vice promotes the Good of Mankind. But 'tis a *mighty* Dishonour and Shame to employ excellent Faculties and abundance of Wit to humour and please Men in their Vices and Follies. Such a one is more hateful as an *ill Man* than valuable as a *good Poet*. The great Enemy of Mankind, notwithstanding his *Wit* and *Angelick Faculties*, is the most *odious* Being of the whole Creation.

Nor is this Abuse confin'd to the Stage; the same Strain runs thro' the other kinds of Poetry. What monstrous, leud, and irreligious Books of Poems, as they are call'd, have been of late days published, and what is the greater

wonder, receiv'd in a Civiliz'd and Christian Kingdom with *Applause* and *Reputation*? The sweetness of the Wit makes the *Poison* go down with Pleasure, and the Contagion spreads without Opposition. Young Gentlemen and Ladies are generally pleas'd and diverted with *Poetry* more than by any other way of Writing; but there are few Poems they can fix on but they are like to pay too dear for their Entertainment. Their Fancies are like to be fill'd with impure *Ideas*, and their Minds engag'd in *hurtful* Passions, which are the more lasting by being convey'd in lively Expressions and all the Address of an artful Poet.

For this End among others I undertook the writing of this Poem, hoping I might be able to please and entertain, not only without hurting the Reader, but to his advantage. I was willing to make one *Effort* towards the rescuing the *Muses* out of the hands of these *Ravishers*, to restore them to their sweet and chast Mansions, and to engage them in an Employment suitable to their *Dignity*. If I succeed not my self in this good Design, I hope at least I shall awaken the Courage and Compassion of some other *brave Adventurers*, that may more happily attempt this honorable Work.

To write an Epick Poem is a work of that Difficulty, that no one for near seventeen hundred years past has succeeded in it; and only those two great Wits *Homer* and *Virgil* before. That the modern Poets have been so unsuccessful has not, I imagin, proceeded so much from want of *Genius* as from their Ignorance of the Rules of writing such a Poem, or at least from their want of attending to them. Tho' *Aristotle*'s excellent Rules of Poetry were early publish'd by *Victorius* at *Florence*, and soon after farther illustrated by the Comments of several *Italian Criticks*, yet we do not find that *Ariosto* or *Tasso* either were very careful to observe them. And, indeed, our *modern Writers* seem neither to have attended to those incomparable Rules, nor

carefully to have consider'd the great *Models* that *Homer* and *Virgil* had left them. Some Readers that are not vers'd in this matter imagin every thing written in *Heroick Verse* is an *Heroick Poem*; but these have not consider'd the *Nature* of such a Work, nor look'd into the *Criticks* who have written on this Subject. I shall therefore give the *Definition* of an Epick or Heroick Poem, that those that have it not already may now have a true Idea of its Nature.

An Epick Poem is a feign'd or devis'd Story of an *Illustrious Action*, related in Verse, in an *Allegorical*, *Probable*, *Delightful*, and *Admirable* manner, to cultivate the Mind with Instructions of Virtue. 'Tis a feign'd or devis'd Discourse, that is, a *Fable*; and so it agrees with *Tragedy* and *Comedy*. The word *Fable* at first signified indifferently a true or false Story, therefore *Cicero* for distinction uses *Fictas Fabulas* in his Book *de Finibus*. But afterwards Custom obtain'd to use the word always for a feign'd Discourse. And in the first Ages, especially in the Eastern World, great use was made by Learned and Wise Men of these *feign'd Discourses*, *Fables*, or *Apologues*, to teach the ruder and more unpolish'd Part of Mankind. *Theologians*, *Philosophers*, and great *Law-givers* every where fell into this way of instructing and cultivating the People in the Knowledge of Religion, Natural Philosophy, and Moral and Political Virtues. So *Thales*, *Orpheus*, *Solon*, *Homer*, and the rest of the great Men in those Ages have done, and the famous Philosopher *Socrates* is by some affirm'd to be the Author of many of the Fables that pass under *Æsop's* name. Most of them made their Fables in Verse, that by the addition of *Harmony* and *Numbers* they might the better attain their End. *Strabo* and *Plutarch* greatly commend this way of teaching the People; and these reasons may be given for the usefulness of it. Naked Philosophical Precepts and Doctrines are of themselves *harsh* and *dry*, hardly attended to, and *un-*

gratefully entertain'd. If the Hearers are *rude* and *course*, or very *vicious*, there is no hope of gaining them by a *grave* and *solemn* Discourse of Virtue, and even the better and more civiliz'd Auditors are hardly kept attentive to it. Man is naturally a lover of *Pleasure*, and if you would do him Good, it must be by *pleasing* him; you must give him *Delight*, and keep his Mind in a constant agreeable Agitation, else he will not attend to the most useful *Counsel* and *Instruction*. He is pleas'd already with the *Notions* and *Habitudes*, howsoever *false* or *vicious*, that have the *present* Possession of him, and you must give him a great deal of *Pleasure* and *Entertainment* to engage him to hear you, when you would perswade him to the trouble of becoming *Wiser* and *Better*. Now the first Wise Men that undertook to *civilize* and *polish* the barbarous World found this way of *Fables*, especially in Verse, to be mighty *Acceptable* to the People: The Contrivance gave them *Delight*, and the Novelty rais'd their *Admiration*. They could learn them perfectly and repeat them often, by which means the Instructions of Virtue covertly contain'd in them were inculcated on their Minds.

And we find that many Ages after *Orpheus*, *Solon*, *Homer*, &c., the *Divine Law-giver* of the *Christians* thought fit to teach the People by *Apologues*, *Parables*, or *Fables*, under which he cover'd and disguis'd his Heavenly Instructions.

The Action must be *Illustrious* and *Important*: Illustrious in respect of the Person, who is the Author of it, who is always some *Valiant* or *Wise* or *Pious* Prince or great Commander: But let his Character be what it will in other respects (for there is no Necessity the *Hero* should be a good or a wise Person) 'tis always necessary he should have *Courage*, which single Quality is sufficient to make the *Hero*. And the Action must be *important*, both in respect of its *Object* and its *End*. 'Tis the Action of

some great Person about some *noble* and *weighty* Affair. 'Tis true there are many other Persons concern'd, but 'tis the Action of the *chief* Person that gives the *Being* and *Denomination* to the Poem. This Action must be but one; when it ceases, the Poem is ended; and if it be reviv'd and taken up again, 'tis a new Poem begins. Action is Motion, and if it ceases cannot be reviv'd so as to be numerically the same. There are indeed many other Actions besides the *Principal* one, but they all depend on, and have relation to, that which is Principal, with the *Unity* of which the *Unity* of the Poem stands or falls. If this principal Action be *broken*, the Poem is *broken* too; if there be any other Action *coordinate* and *independent* on this, the Poem is *monstrous*, and has as many Heads as there are found *independent* Actions. The Narration therefore of many Actions successively of one great Person, or the History of his Life related in Verse, is by no means an *Heroick Poem*, any one great Action being sufficient for that. That which makes the Unity of the Action is the regular Succession of one *Part* or *Episode* to another, not only as *Antecedents* and *Consequents*, but as it were *Causes* and *Effects*, wherein the Reader may discern that the former *Episode* makes the following necessary; and the *Connection* between them is such that they *assist* and *support* each other as the *Members* of the Body do, no Episode being out of its place, of a *disproportion'd* size to the Rest, or that could be spar'd from its place without *maiming* or at least *deforming* the Whole. If this order of the Episodes be preserv'd and there appears none but what *naturally* and *probably* results from the *principal* Action, then the Action may be look'd on as one.

The Action must be related in an *Allegorical* manner; and this Rule is best observ'd, when, as *Divines* speak, there is both a *Literal* Sense obvious to every Reader and that gives him satisfaction enough if he sees no farther,

and besides another *Mystical* or *Typical* Sense, not hard to be discover'd by those Readers that penetrate the matter deeper. *Virgil* seems most happy in this Conduct, whose Poem all along contains this double Sense; *Homer* has often only an *Allegorical* Sense without the *Literal*, and therefore is not so well accommodated to this Age as he was to that of *Augustus*. But *Ariosto* and *Spencer*, however *great Wits*, not observing this judicious Conduct of *Virgil*, nor attending to any sober Rules, are hurried on with a *boundless, impetuous* Fancy over Hill and Dale, till they are both lost in a Wood of Allegories,—Allegories so *wild, unnatural*, and *extravagant*, as greatly displease the Reader. This way of writing mightily offends in this Age; and 'tis a wonder how it came to please in any. There is indeed a way of writing purely Allegorical, as when *Vices* and *Virtues* are introduc'd as *Persons*,—the first as Furies, the other as *Divine Persons* or *Goddesses*,—which still obtains, and is well enough accommodated to the *present* Age. For the *Allegory* is presently discern'd, and the Reader is by no means impos'd on, but sees it immediately to be an *Allegory*, and is both delighted and instructed with it. The devis'd Story must be related in a *probable* manner; without this all things will be *harsh, unnatural*, and *monstrous*, and consequently most *odious* and *offensive* to the Judicious. *Probability* must be in the *Action*, the *Conduct*, the *Manners*; and where humane means cannot, *Machines* are introduc'd to support it. Nothing is more necessary then *Probability*, no Rule more chastly to be observ'd.

An Epick Poem must likewise be *delightful* and *admirable*; and to make it so, must concur sublime Thoughts, clear and noble Expression, Purity of Language, a just and due Proportion, Relation, and Dependance between the Parts, and a beautiful and regular Structure and Connection discernable in the *Whole*. Without these it

will not be capable of giving *Delight* or raising *Admiration*. *Admiration* is the *Formal Object* of an Epick Poem; nothing is to be admitted there but as it is *admirable*; and by this it is discriminated from all other sorts of Poetry. Every *kind* endeavours to *please* and *delight*, but this only attempts to please by *astonishing* and *amazing* the Reader. In an Epick Poem every thing should appear *great* and *wonderful*; the Thoughts cannot be too much *Elevated*, the Episodes too *Noble*, the Expression too *Magnificent*, nor the Action too *Wonderful* and *Surprising*, if Probability be preserv'd. No Riches of *Fancy*, no *Pomp* of *Eloquence* can be laid out too much on such a Work, where the *Design* is throughout to raise our *Admiration*. To render the Action the more *Admirable*, *Homer* and *Virgil* have introduc'd the *Gods*, and engag'd them every where as *Parties*; and tho' I cannot say this is *Essential* and *Necessary* to an Epick Poem, yet 'tis evident that interesting *Heaven* and *Hell* in the matter does mightily raise the Subject, and makes the Action appear more wonderful. The Pagan Poets had in this a great advantage; their *Theology* was such as would easily mix it self with their Poems, from whence they receiv'd their greatest Beauties. *Homer*, indeed, to raise his Subject by his frequent *Machines*, seems to have debas'd his *Religion*. *Virgil*'s Conduct, in my Opinion, is more careful and chast. But some of our *modern Criticks* have believ'd 'tis scarce possible for a *Christian* Poet to make use of this advantage of introducing *Superiour*, *Invisible* Powers into the Action, and therefore seem to despair of seeing an *Heroick Poem* written now that shall reach to the *Dignity* of those of the Pagans. They think the *Christian Religion* is not so well accommodated to this matter as the *Pagan* was; and that if any Attempt be made this way, *Religion* will *suffer* more than the *Poem* will gain by it. *My Opinion* has always differ'd from these Gentlemen's; I believe a *Christian Poet*

has as great advantages as the *Pagan* had, and that our *Theology* may enter into an Epick Poem, and *raise* the Subject without being it self *debas'd*. And this indeed was a second Reason why I undertook this Work, so full of *Difficulty* and *Hazard*. I was willing to give an Instance wherein it might appear that the Assertion I have advanc'd is *actually* true.

In the Definition which I have given of an Heroick Poem, according to the Sense and Judgment of the *best Criticks*, I have said its End is to convey some Instruction of Virtue. But of this I have discours'd at large at the beginning of this *Preface*, and there is no need of repeating it.

'Tis not for me to proceed to Censure other Mens Performances of this Kind; whoever will be at the Pains to read the Commentators on *Aristotle* and *Horace*'s Rules of Poetry, or that will but carefully consider *Rapin*, *Dacier*, and *Bossu*, those great masters among the *French*, and the Judicious Remarks of our own *excellent Critick*, *Mr. Rymer*, who seems to have better consider'd these matters and to have seen farther into them than any of the *English Nation*, will be soon able to see wherein the Heroick Poems that have been publish'd since *Virgil* by the *Italian*, *French*, and *English Wits* have been defective, by comparing them with the *Rules* of Writing set down by those *great Masters*. Whether I have succeeded better must be left to the determination of the Judicious Reader.

In this Work I have endeavour'd mostly to form my self on *Virgil*'s *Model*, which I look on as the most *just* and *perfect*, and which is most easily accommodated to the present Age, supposing the *Christian Religion* in the place of the *Pagan*. I do not make any *Apology* for my *Imitation of Virgil* in so many places of this Poem; for the same *great Master* has imitated *Homer* as frequently and closely, and I do not find that any of his *Criticks* have condemn'd him for his doing so. Nor is it at all *improbable* but that the

Greek Poet himself imitated his Predecessors of the same Nation, tho' no doubt he wonderfully improv'd their Model. *Homer* was not the first Writer of an Epick Poem. We find *Aristotle*, in his Book of the Art of Poetry, makes mention of several before him. He tells us of an Epick Poem, intituled, *The Little Ilias*, and another, the *Cyprica*; and censures them both, as containing many *perfect, distinct,* and *independent* Actions. The last of these Poems is likewise mention'd by *Herodotus* in *Euterpe*, by *Athenœus* and *Pausanias*. And 'tis likely many more such Poems were written before *Homer*'s time, who might be well suppos'd to have imitated them in what they had done well, as well as to have improv'd them in avoiding many of their Errors.

What *Homer* and *Virgil* have *perform'd* with Honour and universal Applause, I have *attempted*: What they have been *able*, I have been *willing* to do. If I have not succeeded, my disappointment will be the less, in that Poetry has been so far from being my *Business* and *Profession*, that it has imploy'd but a small part of my Time, and then but as my *Recreation* and the Entertainment of my idle hours. If this Attempt succeeds so far as to excite some other Person that has a *noble Genius*, *Leisure*, and *Application*, to Honour his Country with a *just Epick Poem*, I shall think the *Vacancies* and *Intervals* that for about two years past I have had from the *Business* of my *Profession*, which notwithstanding was then greater then at any time before, have been very well imploy'd.

WILLIAM CONGREVE

CONCERNING HUMOUR IN COMEDY

1695

Mr. Congreve *to Mr.* Dennis,
Concerning Humour in Comedy.

Dear Sir:

YOU write to me that you have Entertained your self two or three days with reading several Comedies of several Authors; and your Observation is that there is more of *Humour* in our English Writers than in any of the other Comick Poets, Ancient or Modern. You desire to know my Opinion, and at the same time my Thought, of that which is generally call'd *Humour* in Comedy.

I agree with you in an Impartial Preference of our English Writers in that Particular. But if I tell you my Thoughts of *Humour*, I must at the same time confess that what I take for true *Humour* has not been so often written even by them as is generally believed: And some who have valued themselves and have been esteem'd by others for that kind of Writing have seldom touch'd upon it. To make this appear to the World would require a long and labour'd Discourse, and such as I neither am able nor willing to undertake. But such little Remarks as may be contained within the Compass of a Letter, and such unpremeditated Thoughts as may be Communicated between Friend and Friend without incurring the Censure of the World or setting up for a *Dictator*, you shall have from me, since you have enjoyn'd it.

To Define *Humour* perhaps were as difficult as to

Define *Wit*; for like that it is of infinite variety. To Enumerate the several *Humours* of Men were a Work as endless as to sum up their several Opinions. And in my mind the *Quot homines tot Sententiæ* might have been more properly interpreted of *Humour*; since there are many Men of the same Opinion in many things who are yet quite different in Humours. But thô we cannot certainly tell what *Wit* is, or what *Humour* is, yet we may go near to shew something which is not *Wit* or not *Humour*, and yet often mistaken for both. And since I have mentioned *Wit* and *Humour* together, let me make the first Distinction between them, and observe to you that *Wit is often mistaken for Humour.*

I have observed that when a few things have been Wittily and Pleasantly spoken by any Character in a Comedy, it has been very usual for those who make their Remarks on a Play while it is acting to say, *Such a thing is very Humorously spoken; There is a great Deal of Humour in that Part.* Thus the Character of the Person speaking, may be, Surprizingly and Pleasantly is mistaken for a Character of *Humour*, which indeed is a Character of *Wit.* But there is a great Difference between a Comedy wherein there are many things *Humorously*, as they call it, which is *Pleasantly* spoken, and one where there are several Characters of *Humour*, distinguish'd by the Particular and Different Humours appropriated to the several Persons represented, and which naturally arise from the different Constitutions, Complexions, and Dispositions of Men. The saying of Humorous Things does not distinguish Characters; For every Person in a Comedy may be allow'd to speak them. From a Witty Man they are expected; and even a *Fool* may be permitted to stumble on 'em by chance. Thô I make a Difference betwixt *Wit* and *Humour*, yet I do not think that Humorous Characters exclude Wit: No, but the Manner of *Wit* should be

adapted to the *Humour*. As, for Instance, a Character of a Splenetick and Peevish *Humour* should have a Satyrical Wit. A Jolly and Sanguine *Humour* should have a Facetious Wit. The Former should speak Positively; the Latter, Carelesly: For the former Observes and shews things as they are; the latter rather overlooks Nature, and speaks things as he would have them, and his *Wit* and *Humour* have both of them a less Alloy of Judgment than the others.

As *Wit*, so its opposite, *Folly, is sometimes mistaken for Humour*.

When a Poet brings a *Character* on the Stage committing a thousand Absurdities, and talking Impertinencies, roaring Aloud, and Laughing immoderately on every or rather upon no occasion, this is a Character of Humour.

Is any thing more common than to have a pretended Comedy stuff'd with such Grotesques, Figures, and Farce Fools? Things that either are not in Nature, or, if they are, are Monsters and Births of Mischance, and consequently, as such, should be stifled and huddled out of the way, like *Sooterkins*, that Mankind may not be shock'd with an appearing Possibility of the Degeneration of a God-like *Species*. For my part, I am as willing to Laugh as any body, and as easily diverted with an Object truly ridiculous; but at the same time I can never care for seeing things that force me to entertain low thoughts of my Nature. I dont know how it is with others, but I confess freely to you I could never look long upon a Monkey without very Mortifying Reflections, thô I never heard any thing to the Contrary why that Creature is not Originally of a Distinct *Species*. As I dont think *Humour* exclusive of *Wit*, neither do I think it inconsistent with *Folly*; but I think the Follies should be only such as Mens Humours may incline 'em to, and not Follies intirely abstracted from both Humour and Nature.

Sometimes *Personal Defects are misrepresented for Humours.*

I mean, sometimes Characters are barbarously exposed on the Stage, ridiculing Natural Deformities, Casual Defects in the Senses, and Infirmities of Age. Sure the Poet must both be very Ill-natur'd himself, and think his Audience so, when he proposes by shewing a Man Deform'd, or Deaf, or Blind, to give them an agreeable Entertainment, and hopes to raise their Mirth by what is truly an object of Compassion. But much need not be said upon this Head to any body, especially to you, who, in one of your Letters to me concerning Mr. *Johnson*'s *Fox*, have justly excepted against this Immoral part of *Ridicule* in *Corbaccio*'s Character; and there I must agree with you to blame him whom otherwise I cannot enough admire for his great Mastery of true Humour in Comedy.

External Habit of Body is often mistaken for Humour.

By *External Habit* I do not mean the Ridiculous Dress or Cloathing of a Character, thô that goes a good way in some received Characters. (But undoubtedly a Man's Humour may incline him to dress differently from other People). But I mean a Singularity of Manners, Speech, and Behaviour, peculiar to all or most of the same Country, Trade, Profession, or Education. I cannot think that a *Humour* which is only a Habit or Disposition contracted by Use or Custom; for by a Disuse, or Complyance with other Customs, it may be worn off or diversify'd.

Affectation is generally mistaken for Humour.

These are indeed so much alike that at a Distance they may be mistaken one for the other. For what is *Humour* in one may be *Affectation* in another; and nothing is more common than for some to affect particular ways of saying and doing things, peculiar to others whom they admire and would imitate. *Humour* is the Life, *Affectation* the

Picture. He that draws a Character of *Affectation* shews *Humour* at the Second Hand; he at best but publishes a Translation, and his Pictures are but Copies.

But as these two last distinctions are the Nicest, so it may be most proper to Explain them by Particular Instances from some Author of Reputation. *Humour* I take either to be born with us, and so of a Natural Growth, or else to be grafted into us by some accidental change in the Constitution, or revolution of the Internal Habit of Body, by which it becomes, if I may so call it, Naturaliz'd.

Humour is from Nature, *Habit* from Custom, and *Affectation* from Industry.

Humour shews us as we *are*.

Habit shews us as we appear under a forcible Impression.

Affectation shews what we would be under a Voluntary Disguise.

Thô here I would observe by the way that a continued Affectation may in time become a Habit.

The Character of *Morose* in the *Silent Woman* I take to be a Character of Humour. And I choose to instance this Character to you from many others of the same Author, because I know it has been Condemn'd by many as Unnatural and Farce: And you have your self hinted some dislike of it for the same Reason, in a Letter to me concerning some of *Johnson*'s Plays.

Let us suppose *Morose* to be a Man Naturally Splenetick and Melancholly; is there any thing more offensive to one of such a Disposition than Noise and Clamour? Let any Man that has the Spleen (and there are enough in *England*) be Judge. We see common Examples of this Humour in little every day. 'Tis ten to one but three parts in four of the Company that you dine with are Discompos'd and Startled at the Cutting of a Cork or Scratching a Plate with a Knife. It is a Proportion of the same Humour that makes such or any other Noise offen-

sive to the Person that hears it; for there are others who will not be disturb'd at all by it. Well, But *Morose*, you will say, is so Extravagant, he cannot bear any Discourse or Conversation above a Whisper. Why, It is his excess of this Humour that makes him become Ridiculous, and qualifies his Character for Comedy. If the Poet had given him but a Moderate proportion of that Humour, 'tis odds but half the Audience would have sided with the Character and have Condemn'd the Author for Exposing a Humour which was neither Remarkable nor Ridiculous. Besides, the distance of the Stage requires the Figure represented to be something larger than the Life; and sure a Picture may have Features larger in Proportion, and yet be very like the Original. If this Exactness of Quantity were to be observed in Wit, as some would have it in Humour, what would become of those Characters that are design'd for Men of Wit? I believe if a Poet should steal a Dialogue of any Length from the *Extempore* Discourse of the two Wittiest Men upon Earth, he would find the Scene but coldly receiv'd by the Town. But to the purpose.

The Character of Sir *John Daw* in the same Play is a Character of Affectation. He every where discovers an Affectation of Learning, when he is not only Conscious to himself, but the Audience also plainly perceives, that he is Ignorant. Of this kind are the Characters of *Thraso* in the Eunuch of *Terence*, and *Pyrgopolinices* in the *Miles Gloriosus* of *Plautus*. They affect to be thought Valiant, when both themselves and the Audience know they are not. Now, such a boasting of Valour in Men who were really Valiant would undoubtedly be a *Humour*; for a Fiery Disposition might naturally throw a Man into the same Extravagance, which is only affected in the Characters I have mentioned.

The Character of *Cob* in *Every Man in his Humour* and most of the under Characters in *Bartholomew-Fair* discover

only a Singularity of Manners, appropriated to the several Educations and Professions of the Persons represented. They are not Humours but Habits contracted by Custom. Underthis Head maybe ranged all Country-Clowns, Sailers, Tradesmen, Jockeys, Gamesters, and such like, who make use of *Cants* or peculiar *Dialects* in their several Arts and Vocations. One may almost give a Receipt for the Composition of such a Character: For the Poet has nothing to do but to collect a few proper Phrases and terms of Art, and to make the Person apply them by ridiculous Metaphors in his Conversation with Characters of different Natures. Some late Characters of this kind have been very successful; but in my mind they may be Painted without much Art or Labour, since they require little more than a good Memory and Superficial Observation. But true *Humour* cannot be shewn without a Dissection of Nature, and a Narrow Search to discover the first Seeds from whence it has its Root and growth.

If I were to write to the World, I should be obliged to dwell longer upon each of these Distinctions and Examples, for I know that they would not be plain enough to all Readers. But a bare hint is sufficient to inform you of the Notions which I have on this Subject: And I hope by this time you are of my Opinion, that Humour is neither Wit, nor Folly, nor Personal defect, nor Affectation, nor Habit, and yet that each and all of these have been both written and received for Humour.

I should be unwilling to venture even on a bare Description of Humour, much more to make a Definition of it, but now my hand is in, Ile tell you what serves me instead of either. I take it to be *A singular and unavoidable manner of doing or saying any thing, Peculiar and Natural to one Man only, by which his Speech and Actions are distinguish'd from those of other men.*

Our *Humour* has relation to us and to what proceeds

from us, as the Accidents have to a Substance; it is a Colour, Taste, and Smell, Diffused through all; thô our Actions are never so many and different in Form, they are all Splinters of the same Wood, and have Naturally one Complexion, which thô it may be disguised by Art, yet cannot be wholly changed: We may Paint it with other Colours, but we cannot change the Grain. So the Natural sound of an Instrument will be distinguish'd, thô the Notes expressed by it are never so various, and the Divisions never so many. Dissimulation may by Degrees become more easy to our practice; but it can never absolutely Transubstantiate us into what we would seem: It will always be in some proportion a Violence upon Nature.

A Man may change his Opinion, but I believe he will find it a Difficulty to part with his *Humour*, and there is nothing more provoking than the being made sensible of that difficulty. Sometimes one shall meet with those who perhaps Innocently enough, but at the same time impertinently, will ask the Question, *Why are you not Merry? Why are you not Gay, Pleasant, and Cheerful?* then, instead of answering, could I ask such a one, *Why are you not handsome? Why have you not Black Eyes and a better Complexion?* Nature abhors to be forced.

The two Famous Philosophers of *Ephesus* and *Abdera* have their different Sects at this day. Some Weep and others Laugh at one and the same thing.

I dont doubt but you have observed several Men Laugh when they are Angry, others who are Silent, some that are Loud: Yet I cannot suppose that it is the passion of *Anger* which is in it self different, or more or less in one than t'other, but that it is the *Humour* of the Man that is Predominant, and urges him to express it in that manner. Demonstrations of pleasure are as Various: one Man has a Humour of retiring from all Company, when any thing has happen'd to please him beyond expectation; he hugs

himself alone, and thinks it an Addition to the pleasure to keep it Secret. Another is upon Thorns till he has made Proclamation of it, and must make other people sensible of his happiness before he can be so himself. So it is in Grief and other Passions. Demonstrations of Love and the Effects of that Passion upon several Humours are infinitely different; but here the Ladies who abound in Servants are the best Judges. Talking of the Ladies, methinks something should be observed of the Humour of the Fair Sex, since they are sometimes so kind as to furnish out a Character for Comedy. But I must confess I have never made any observation of what I Apprehend to be true Humour in Women. Perhaps Passions are too powerful in that Sex to let Humour have its Course; or may be by Reason of their Natural Coldness, Humour cannot Exert it self to that extravagant Degree which it often does in the Male Sex. For if ever any thing does appear Comical or Ridiculous in a Woman, I think it is little more than an acquir'd Folly or an Affectation. We may call them the weaker Sex, but I think the true Reason is because our Follies are Stronger and our Faults are more prevailing.

One might think that the Diversity of Humour, which must be allowed to be diffused throughout Mankind, might afford endless matter for the support of Comedies. But when we come closely to consider that point, and nicely to distinguish the Difference of Humours, I believe we shall find the contrary. For thô we allow every Man something of his own, and a peculiar Humour, yet every Man has it not in quantity to become Remarkable by it: Or, if many do become Remarkable by their Humours, yet all those Humours may not be Diverting. Nor is it only requisite to distinguish what Humour will be diverting, but also how much of it, what part of it to shew in Light, and what to cast in Shades, how to set it off by preparatory Scenes,

and by opposing other humours to it in the same Scene. Thrô a wrong Judgment, sometimes, Mens Humours may be opposed when there is really no specific Difference between them, only a greater proportion of the same in one than t'other, occasion'd by his having more Flegm, or Choller, or whatever the Constitution is from whence their Humours derive their Source.

There is infinitely more to be said on this Subject, thô perhaps I have already said to much; but I have said it to a Friend, who I am sure will not expose it, if he does not approve of it. I believe the Subject is intirely new, and was never touch'd upon before; and if I would have any one to see this private Essay, it should be some one who might be provoked by my Errors in it to Publish a more Judicious Treatise on the Subject. Indeed I wish it were done, that the World, being a little acquainted with the scarcity of true Humour and the difficulty of finding and shewing it, might look a little more favourably on the Labours of them who endeavour to search into Nature for it and lay it open to the Publick View.

I dont say but that very entertaining and useful Characters, and proper for Comedy, may be drawn from Affectations and those other Qualities which I have endeavoured to distinguish from Humour; but I would not have such imposed on the World for Humour, nor esteem'd of Equal value with it. It were perhaps the Work of a long Life to make one Comedy true in all its Parts, and to give every Character in it a True and Distinct Humour. Therefore every Poet must be beholding to other helps to make out his Number of ridiculous Characters. But I think such a One deserves to be broke, who makes all false Musters; who does not shew one true Humour in a Comedy, but entertains his Audience to the end of the Play with every thing out of Nature.

I will make but one Observation to you more, and have

done; and that is grounded upon an Observation of your own, and which I mention'd at the beginning of my Letter, *viz.* That there is more of Humour in our English Comick Writers than in any others. I do not at all wonder at it, for I look upon Humour to be almost of English Growth; at least, it does not seem to have found such Encrease on any other Soil. And what appears to me to be the reason of it is the greater Freedom, Privilege, and Liberty which the Common People of *England* enjoy. Any Man that has a Humour is under no restraint or fear of giving it Vent; they have a Proverb among them, which may be will shew the Bent and Genius of the People as well as a longer Discourse: *He that will have a May-pole shall have a May-pole.* This is a Maxim with them, and their Practice is agreeable to it. I believe something Considerable too may be ascribed to their feeding so much on Flesh, and the Grossness of their Diet in general. But I have done; let the Physicians agree that. Thus you have my Thoughts of *Humour*, to my Power of Expressing them in so little Time and Compass. You will be kind to shew me wherein I have Err'd; and as you are very Capable of giving me Instruction, so I think I have a very Just title to demand it from you, being without Reserve,

Your real Friend,
and humble Servant,

July 10, 1695. W. Congreve.

JEREMY COLLIER

FROM *A SHORT VIEW OF THE IMMORALITY AND PROFANENESS OF THE ENGLISH STAGE*

1698

CHAP. IV.

The Stage-Poets make their Principal Persons Vitious, and reward them at the End of the Play.

THE Lines of Virtue and Vice are Struck out by Nature in very Legible Distinctions. They tend to a different Point, and in the greater Instances the Space between them is easily perceiv'd. Nothing can be more unlike than the Original Forms of these Qualities. The First has all the sweetness, Charms, and Graces imaginable; The other has the Air of a *Post* ill Carved into a *Monster*, and looks both foolish and Frightful together. These are the Native Appearances of good and Evil: And they that endeavour to blot the Distinctions, to rub out the Colours, or change the Marks, are extreamly to blame. 'Tis confessed, as long as the Mind is awake, and Conscience goes true, there 's no fear of being imposed on. But when Vice is varnish'd over with Pleasure, and comes in the Shape of Convenience, the case grows somewhat dangerous; for then the Fancy may be gain'd, and the Guards corrupted, and Reason suborn'd against it self. And thus a *Disguise* often passes when the Person would otherwise be stopt. To put *Lewdness* into a Thriving condition, to give it an Equipage of Quality, and to treat it with Ceremony and Respect, is the way to confound the Understanding, to fortifie the Charm, and to make the Mischief invincible. Innocence is often owing to Fear, and Appetite is kept

under by Shame. But when these Restraints are once taken off, when Profit and Liberty lie on the same side, and a Man can Debauch himself into Credit, what can be expected in such a case but that Pleasure should grow Absolute and Madness carry all before it? The *Stage* seem eager to bring Matters to this Issue; They have made a considerable progress and are still pushing their Point with all the Vigour imaginable. If this be not their Aim, why is *Lewdness* so much consider'd in Character and Success? Why are their Favourites Atheistical and their fine Gentleman debauched? To what purpose is *Vice* thus prefer'd, thus ornamented and caress'd, unless for Imitation? That matter of Fact stands thus, I shall make good by several Instances. To begin then with their Men of Breeding and Figure. *Wild-blood* sets up for *Debauchery*, Ridicules Marriage, and Swears by *Mahomet*. *Bellamy* makes sport with the Devil, and *Lorenzo* is vitious, and calls his Father *Bawdy Magistrate*; *Horner* is horridly Smutty, and *Harcourt* false to his Friend who used him kindly. In the *Plain Dealer*, *Freeman* talks coarsely, cheats the Widdow, debauches her Son, and makes him undutiful. *Bellmour* is Lewd and Profane; And *Mellefont* puts *Careless* in the best way he can to debauch *Lady Plyant*. These *Sparks* generally Marry up the Top Ladys, and those that do not are brought to no Pennance, but go off with the Character of Fine Gentlemen. In *Don-Sebastian*, *Antonio*, an Atheistical Bully, is rewarded with the Lady *Moraima* and half the *Muffty*'s Estate. *Valentine*, in *Love for Love*, is (if I may so call him) the Hero of the *Play*. This Spark the *Poet* would pass for a Person of Virtue, but he speaks to late. 'Tis true, He was hearty in his Affection to *Angelica*. Now, without question, to be in Love with a fine Lady of 30,000 Pounds is a great Virtue! But then, abating this single Commendation, *Valentine* is altogether compounded

Mock Astrol. p. 3, &c.
Mock Astrol. p. 57, 59.
Spanish Fryar, p. 61.
Country Wife, p. 25.
Old Batch.
Double Dealer, p. 34.
Love for Love, p. 90.

of Vice. He is a prodigal Debauchee, unnatural, and Profane, Obscene, Sawcy, and undutiful; And yet this Libertine is crown'd for the Man of Merit, has his Wishes thrown into his Lap, and make the Happy *Exit.* I perceive we should have a rare set of *Virtues* if these *Poets* had the making of them! How they hug a Vitious Character, and how profuse are they in their Liberalities to Lewdness! In the *Provok'd Wife*, *Constant* Swears at Length, solicits Lady *Brute*, Confesses himself Lewd, and prefers Debauchery to Marriage. He handles the last Subject very notably and worth the Hearing. *There is* (says he) *a poor sordid Slavery in Marriage, that turns the flowing Tide of Honour, and sinks it to the lowest ebb of Infamy. 'Tis a Corrupted Soil: Ill Nature, Avarice, Sloth, Cowardize, and Dirt are all its Product.* But then *Constancy* (*alias Whoring*) *is a Brave, Free, Haughty, Generous Agent.* This is admirable stuff both for the Rhetorick and the Reason! The Character of *Young Fashion*, in the *Relapse*, is of the same Staunchness, but this the *Reader* may have in another Place.

Love for Love, *p.* 6, 7, 25, 61, 89, 91.

p. 35.

To sum up the Evidence. A fine Gentleman is a fine Whoring, Swearing, Smutty, Atheistical Man. These Qualifications, it seems, compleat the *Idea* of Honour. They are the Top-Improvements of Fortune, and the distinguishing Glories of Birth and Breeding! This is the *Stage-Test* for *Quality*, and those that can't stand it ought to be *Disclaim'd.* The Restraints of Conscience and the Pedantry of Virtue are unbecoming a Cavalier. Future Securities and Reaching beyond Life are vulgar Provisions. If he falls a Thinking at this rate, he forfeits his Honour; For his Head was only made to run against a Post! Here you have a Man of Breeding and Figure that burlesques the *Bible*, Swears, and talks Smut to Ladies, speaks ill of his Friend behind his Back, and betraies his Interest: A fine Gentleman that has neither Honesty nor Honour,

Conscience nor Manners, Good Nature nor civil Hypocricy: Fine only in the Insignificancy of Life, the Abuse of Religion, and the Scandals of Conversation. These Worshipful Things are the *Poets* Favourites: They appear at the Head of the *Fashion*, and shine in Character and Equipage. If there is any Sense stirring, They must have it, tho' the rest of the *Stage* suffer never so much by the Partiality. And what can be the Meaning of this wretched Distribution of Honour? Is it not to give Credit and Countenance to Vice, and to shame young People out of all pretences to Conscience and Regularity? They seem forc'd to turn Lewd in their own Defence: They can't otherwise justifie themselves to the Fashion, nor keep up the Character of Gentlemen. Thus People not well furnish'd with Thought and Experience are debauch'd both in Practise and Principle. And thus Religion grows uncreditable, and passes for ill Education. The *Stage* seldom gives Quarter to any Thing that's serviceable or Significant, but persecutes Worth and Goodness under every Appearance. He that would be safe from their Satir must take care to disguise himself in Vice, and hang out the *Colours* of Debauchery. How often is Learning, Industry, and Frugality ridiculed in Comedy? The rich Citizens are often Misers and Cuckolds, and the *Universities* Schools of Pedantry upon this score. In short, Libertinism and Profaness, Dressing, Idleness, and Gallantry are the only valuable Qualities. As if People were not apt enough of themselves to be Lazy, Lewd, and Extravagant, unless they were prick'd forward, and provok'd by Glory and Reputation! Thus the Marks of Honour and Infamy are misapplyed, and the Idea's of Virtue and Vice confounded. Thus Monstrousness goes for Proportion, and the Blemishes of Human Nature make up the Beauties of it.

Don Sebast. Love for Love, p. 20.

The fine Ladies are of the same Cut with the Gentlemen. *Moraima* is scandalously rude to her Father, helps him to a beating, and runs away with *Antonio*; *Angelica* talks

sawcily to her Uncle, and *Belinda* confesses her Inclination for a Gallant. And as I have observ'd already, the Top(p)ing Ladies in the *Mock Astrologer, Spanish Fryar, Country Wife, Old Batchelour, Orphan, Double Dealer,* and *Love Triumphant,* are smutty, and sometimes Profane. *Provok'd Wife, p.* 64. *Chap.* 1 & 2.

And was Licentiousness and irreligion alwaies a mark of Honour? No, I don't perceive but that the old *Poets* had an other Notion of Accomplishment, and bred their people of Condition a different way. *Philolaches,* in *Plautus,* laments his being debauch'd, and dilates upon the Advantages of Virtue and Regularity. *Lusiteles,* another Young Gentleman, disputes handsomly by himself against Lewdness. And the discourse between him and *Philto* is Moral and well managed. And afterwards he lashes Luxury and Debauching with a great deal of Warmth and Satir. *Chremes,* in *Terence,* is a modest young Gentleman; he is afraid of being surpriz'd by *Thais,* and seems careful not to sully his Reputation. And *Pamphilus,* in *Hecyra,* resolves rather to be govern'd by Duty than Inclination. *Mostel. A.* 1. 2. *Trinum. A.* 2. 1. *A.* 2. 2. *Eunuch. A.* 3. 3. *Hecyr. A.* 3. 4.

Plautus's *Pinacium* tells her Friend, *Panegyris,* that they ought to acquit themselves fairly to their Husbands, tho' These should fail in their Regards toward them: For all good People will do justice, tho' they don't receive it. Lady *Brute,* in the *Provok'd Wife,* is govern'd by different maxims. She is debauch'd with ill Usage, says *Virtue is an Ass, and a Gallant's worth forty on't. Pinacium* goes on to another Head of Duty, and declares that a Daughter can never respect her Father too much, and that Disobedience has a great deal of scandal and Lewdness in't. The Lady *Jacinta,* as I remember, does not treat her Father at this rate of Decency. Let us hear a little of her Behaviour. The *Mock Astrologer* makes the Men draw, and frights the Ladys with the Apprehension of a Quarrel. Upon this, *Theodosia* crys, *what will become of us? Jacinta* answers, *Stich. A.* 1. 1. *p.* 3. *Stich. A.* 1. 2.

we'll die for Company: nothing vexes me but that I am not a Man, to have one thrust at that malicious old Father of
p. 60. *mine before I go.* Afterwards the old Gentleman, *Alonzo*, threatens his Daughters with a Nunnery. *Jacinta* spars again, and says, *I would have thee to know, thou graceless old Man, that I defy a Nunnery; name a Nunnery once more,*
Ibid. and I disown thee for my Father! I could carry on the Comparison between the old and Modern Poets somewhat farther. But this may suffice.

Thus we see what a fine time Lewd People have on the *English Stage*. No Censure, no mark of Infamy, no Mortification must touch them. They keep their Honour untarnish'd, and carry off the Advantage of their Character. They are set up for the Standard of Behaviour, and the Masters of Ceremony and Sense. And at last, that the Example may work the better, they generally make them rich and happy, and reward them with their own Desires.

Mr. *Dryden*, in the *Preface* to his *Mock-Astrologer*, confesses himself blamed for this Practise,—*For making debauch'd Persons his* Protagonists, *or chief Persons of the Drama, And for making them happy in the Conclusion of the Play, against the Law of Comedy, which is to reward Virtue and to punish Vice.* To this Objection He makes a lame Defence, And answers,

1*st. That he knows no such Law constantly observ'd in Comedy by the Antient or Modern Poets.* What then? *Poets* are not always exactly in Rule. It may be a good Law, tho' 'tis not constantly observ'd; some Laws are constantly broken, and yet ne'er the worse for all that. He goes on, and pleads the Authorities of *Plautus* and *Terence*. I grant there are instances of Favour to vitious young People in those Authors; but to this I reply,

1*st*, That those *Poets* had a greater compass of Liberty in their Religion. Debauchery did not lie under those Discouragements of Scandal and penalty with them as it

does with us. Unless, therefore, He can prove *Heathenism* and *Christianity* the same, his *precedents* will do him little service.

2*ly*, *Horace*, who was as good a judge of the *Stage* as either of those *Comedians*, seems to be of another Opinion. He condemns the obscenities of *Plautus*, and tells you Men of Fortune and Quality in his time would not endure immodest Satir. He continues, that Poets were formerly admired for the great services they did: For teaching Matters relating to Religion and Government; For refining the Manners, tempering the Passions, and improving the Understandings of Mankind; For making them more useful in Domestick Relations and the publick Capacities of Life. This is a demonstration that Vice was not the Inclination of the Muses in those days, and that *Horace* beleiv'd the chief business of a *Poem* was to Instruct the Audience. He adds farther that the *Chorus* ought to turn upon the Argument of the *Drama*, and support the Design of the *Acts*: That They ought to speak in Defence of Virtue and Frugality, and show a Regard to Religion. Now, from the Rule of the *Chorus*, we may conclude his Judgment for the *Play*. For, as he observes, there must be a Uniformity between the *Chorus* and the *Acts*: They must have the same View, and be all of a Piece. From hence 'tis plain that *Horace* would have no immoral *Character* have either Countenance or good Fortune upon the *Stage*. If 'tis said the very mention of the *Chorus* shews the Directions were intended for *Tragedy*, To this

De Art. Poet.

Ibid.

I answer, that the Consequence is not good. For the use of a *Chorus* is not inconsistent with *Comedy*. The antient *Comedians* had it; *Aristophanes* is an Instance. I know 'tis said the *Chorus* was left out in that they call the *New Comedy*. But I can't see the conclusiveness of this Assertion: For *Aristophanes* his *Plutus* is *New Comedy* with a *Chorus* in't. And *Aristotle*, who lived after the Revolution of the

Vid. Schol.

Stage, mentions nothing of the Omission of the *Chorus*. He rather supposes its continuance by saying the *Chorus was added by the Government long after the Invention of Comedy*. 'Tis true *Plautus* and *Terence* have none, but those before them probably might. *Moliere* has now reviv'd them; And *Horace* might be of his Opinion, for ought wee know to the contrary.

Lib. de Poet. cap. 5.

Psyche.

Lastly, Horace, having expresly mentioned the beginning and progress of *Comedy*, discovers himself more fully. He advises a *Poet* to form his Work upon the Precepts of *Socrates* and *Plato*, and the Models of Moral Philosophy. This was the way to preserve Decency, and to assign a proper Fate and Behaviour to every *Character*. Now, if Horace would have his *Poet* govern'd by the Maxims of Morality, he must oblige him to Sobriety of Conduct, and a just distribution of Rewards and Punishments.

Ibid.

Mr. *Dryden* makes Homewards, and endeavours to fortifie himself in Modern Authority. He lets us know that *Ben Johnson, after whom he may be proud to Err, gives him more than one example of this Conduct; That in the* Alchemist *is notorious*, where neither *Face* nor his *Master* are corrected according to their Demerits. But how Proud soever Mr. *Dryden* may be of an Errour, he has not so much of *Ben Jonson's* company as he pretends. His Instance of *Face &c.* in the *Alchemist* is rather *notorious* against his purpose then for it.

Pref. Mock Astrol.

For *Face* did not Council his Master, *Lovewit*, to debauch the Widdow, neither is it clear that the Matter went thus far. He might gain her consent upon Terms of Honour, for ought appears to the contrary. 'Tis true *Face*, who was one of the Principal Cheats, is Pardon'd and consider'd. But then his Master confesses himself kind to a fault. He owns this Indulgence was a Breach of Justice, and unbecoming the Gravity of an old Man; And then desires the Audience to excuse him upon the Score of

the Temptation. But *Face continued in the Cousenage till the last without Repentance.* Under favour I conceive this is *Ibid.* a Mistake. For does not *Face* make an Apology before he leaves the *Stage*? Does he not set himself at the *Bar*, arraign his own Practise, and cast the Cause upon the Clemency of the Company? And are not all these Signs of the Dislike of what he had done? Thus careful the *Poet* is to prevent the Ill Impressions of his *Play*! He brings both Man and Master to Confession. He dismisses them like Malefactours; And moves for their Pardon before he gives them their Discharge. But the *Mock-Astrologer* has a gentler Hand: *Wild-Blood* and *Jacinta* are more generously used: There is no Acknowledgment exacted, no Hardship put upon them: They are permitted to talk on in their Libertine way to the Last, And take Leave without the least appearance of Reformation. The *Mock-Astrologer* urges *Ben Johnson*'s *Silent Woman* as an other *Precedent* to his purpose. For *there* Dauphine *confesses himself in Love with all the Collegiate Lady's. And yet this naughty* Dauphine *is Crowned in the end with the Possession of his Uncles Estate, and with the hopes of all his Mistresses.* This *Ibid.* Charge, as I take it, is somewhat too severe. I grant *Dauphine* Professes himself in Love with the Collegiate Ladies at first. But when they invited him to a private Visit, he makes them no Promise, but rather appears tired and willing to disengage. *Dauphine,* therefore, is not altogether so naughty as this Author represents him.

Ben Johnson's *Fox* is clearly against Mr. *Dryden.* And here I have his own Confession for proof. He declares the *Poets end in this Play was the Punishment of Vice and the Reward of Virtue. Ben* was forced to strain for this piece of Justice, and break through the *Unity of Design.* This Mr. *Dryden* remarks upon him: However, he is pleased to commend the Performance, and calls it an excellent *Fifth Act.* *Essay of Dramatick Poetry,* p. 28.

Ben Johnson shall speak for himself afterwards in the Character of a Critick. In the mean time I shall take a Testimony or two from *Shakespear*. And here we may observe the admir'd *Falstaffe* goes off in Disappointment. He is thrown out of Favour as being a *Rake*, and dies like a Rat behind the Hangings. The Pleasure he had given would not excuse him. The *Poet* was not so partial as to let his Humour compound for his Lewdness. If 'tis objected that this remark is wide of the Point, because *Falstaffe* is represented in Tragedy, where the Laws of Justice are more strickly observ'd: To this I answer that you may call *Henry* the Fourth and Fifth Tragedies if you please. But for all that, *Falstaffe* wears no *Buskins*; his Character is perfectly Comical from end to end.

The London Prodigall.

The next Instance shall be in *Flowerdale*, the *Prodigal*. This Spark, notwithstanding his Extravagance, makes a lucky Hand on't at last, and marries a rich Lady. But then the Poet qualifies him for his good Fortune, and mends his Manners with his Circumstances. He makes him repent and leave off his Intemperance, Swearing, *&c.* And when his Father warn'd him against a Relapse, He answers very soberly,

Heaven helping me, I'le hate the Course of Hell.

I could give some Instances of this kind out of *Beaumount* and *Fletcher*. But there's no need of any farther Quotation; For Mr. *Dryden* is not satisfied with his Apology from Authority: He does as good as own that this may be construed no better than defending one ill practise by another. To prevent this very reasonable objection he endeavours to vindicate his *Precedents* from the Reason of the Thing. To this purpose he *makes a wide difference between the Rules of Tragedy and Comedy*: *That Vice must be impartially prosecuted in the first, because the Persons are great, &c.*

It seems, then, *Executions* are only for *Greatness* and

Quality. Justice is not to strike much *lower* than a *Prince. Private People* may do what they *please.* They are too *few* for *Mischief,* and too *Little* for *Punishment*! This would be admirable Doctrine for *Newgate,* and give us a general *Goal-Delivery* without more ado. But in *Tragedy* (says the *Mock Astrologer*) *the Crimes are likewise Horrid,* so that there is a necessity for Severity and Example. And how stands the matter in *Comedy*? Quite otherwise. There the *Faults are but the sallies of Youth and the Frailties of* *Ibid.* *Human Nature.* For Instance: There is nothing but a little Whoring, Pimping, Gaming, Profaness, *&c.* And who could be so hard hearted to give a Man any Trouble for This? Such Rigours would be strangely Inhumane! A *Poet* is a better natur'd Thing, I can assure you. These little Miscarriages *move Pity and Commiseration, and are* *Ibid.* *not such as must of necessity be Punish'd.* This is comfortable Casuistry! But to be Serious: Is Dissolution of Manners such a Peccadillo? Does a Profligate Conscience deserve nothing but Commiseration? And are People damn'd only for *Humane Frailties*? I perceive the Laws of Religion and those of the *Stage* differ extreamly. The strength of his Defence lies in this choice Maxim, that the *Cheif End of Comedy is Delight.* He questions *whether Instruction has any thing to do in Comedy*; If it has, he is sure *'tis no more then its secondary end: For the business of* *Ibid.* *the Poet is to make you laugh.* Granting the Truth of this Principle, I somewhat question the serviceableness of it. For is there no Diversion to be had unless Vice appears prosperous and rides at the Head of Success? One would think such a preposterous distribution of Rewards should rather shock the Reason and raise the Indignation of the *Audience.* To laugh without reason is the Pleasure of Fools; and against it, of something worse. The exposing of Knavery, and making *Lewdness* ridiculous, is a much better occasion for Laughter: And this, with submission,

I take to be the End of *Comedy*. And therefore it does not differ from *Tragedy* in the End, but in the *Means*. Instruction is the principal Design of both. The one works by Terror, the other by Infamy. 'Tis true, they don't move in the same Line, but they meet in the same point at last. For this Opinion I have good Authority, besides what has been cited already.

1*st*, Monsieur *Rapin* affirms, 'That Delight is the End that Poetry aims at, but not the Principal one. For Poetry, being an Art, ought to be profitable by the quality of it's own nature, and by the Essential Subordination that all Arts should have to Polity, whose End in General is the publick Good. This is the Judgment of *Aristotle* and of *Horace*, his chief Interpreter.' *Ben Johnson*, in his Dedicatory Epistle of his *Fox*, has somewhat considerable upon this Argument; And declaims with a great deal of zeal, spirit, and good Sense against the Licentiousness of the *Stage*. He lays it down for a Principle, 'That 'tis impossible to be a good *Poet* without being a good *Man*. That he (a good Poet) is said to be able to inform Young Men to all good Discipline, and enflame grown Men to all great Virtues, &c.——That the general complaint was that the *Writers* of those days had nothing remaining in them of the Dignity of a *Poet* but the abused Name. That now, especially in Stage Poetry, nothing but Ribaldry, Profanation, *Blasphemy*, all Licence of Offence to God and Man, is practised. He confesses a great part of this Charge is over-true, and is sorry he dares not deny it. But then he hopes all are not embark'd in this bold Adventure for Hell. For my part (says he) I can, and from a most clear Conscience, affirm, That I have ever trembled to think towards the least Profaness, and loath'd the Use of such foul and unwash'd Bawdry as is now made the Food of the *Scene*;——The encrease of which Lust in Liberty what Learned or Liberal Soul does not abhor? In whole *Enter-*

Rapin, Reflect., &c., p. 10.

ludes nothing but the Filth of the Time is utter'd——with Brothelry able to violate the Ear of a *Pagan*, and Blasphemy to turn the Blood of a Christian to Water.' He continues, 'that the Insolence of these Men had brought the *Muses* into Disgrace, and made *Poetry* the lowest scorn of the Age.' He appeals to his Patrons, the *Universities*, 'that his Labour has been heretofore, and mostly in this his latest Work, to reduce not only the antient Forms but Manners of the *Scene*, the Innocence and the Doctrine, which is the Principal End of Poesy, to inform Men in the best Reason of Living.' Lastly, he adds, that 'he has imitated the Conduct of the Antients in this *Play*, The goings out (or Conclusions) of whose *Comedies* were not always joyful, but oft-times the Bawds, the Slaves, the Rivals, yea and the Masters are mul(c)ted, and fitly, it being the Office of a *Comick Poet* (mark that!) to imitate Justice and Instruct to Life,' *&c.* Say you so! Why, then, if *Ben Johnson* knew any thing of the Matter, Divertisment and Laughing is not, as Mr. *Dryden* affirms, the *Chief End* of *Comedy*. This Testimony is so very full and clear that it needs no explaining, nor any enforcement from Reasoning and Consequence.

And because Laughing and Pleasure has such an unlimited Prerogative upon the *Stage*, I shall add a Citation or two from *Aristotle* concerning this Matter. Now, this great Man calls 'those Buffoons and Impertinents who rally without any regard to Persons and Things, to Decency or good Manners. That there is a great difference between Ribaldry and handsom Rallying. He that would perform exactly must keep within the Character of Virtue and Breeding'. He goes on, and tells us that 'the old Comedians entertain'd the Audience with Smut, but the Modern ones avoided that Liberty and grew more reserv'd. This latter way, he says, was much more proper and Gentile then the other: That, in his Opinion, Rallying no

less than Railing ought to be under the Discipline of Law: That he who is ridden by his *Jests*, and minds nothing but the business of *Laughing*, is himself Ridiculous: And that a Man of Education and Sense is so far from going these Lengths that he wont so much as endure the hearing some sort of Buffoonry.'

Libr. 4. de Morib. cap. 14.

And as to the point of Delight in general, the same Author affirms, 'that scandalous Satisfactions are not properly Pleasures. 'Tis only Distemper and false Appetite which makes them palatable: And a Man that is sick, seldom has his Tast true. Besides, supposing we throw Capacity out of the Question, and make Experiment and Sensation the Judge; Granting this, we ought not to chop at every Bait nor Fly out at every Thing that strikes the Fancy. The meer Agreableness must not overbear us, without distinguishing upon the Quality and the Means. Pleasure, how charming soever, must not be fetched out of Vice. An Estate is a pretty thing, but if we purchase by Falshood and Knavery, we pay too much for't. Some Pleasures are Childish, and others abominable; And upon the whole, Pleasure, absolutely speaking, is no good Thing.' And so much for the Philosopher. And because *Ribaldry* is used for Sport, a passage or two from *Quintilian* may not be unseasonable. This Orator does not only Condemn the grosser Instances, but cuts off all the *Double-Entendre's* at a Blow. He comes up to the Regularity of Thought, and tells us 'that the Meaning as well as the Words of Discourse must be unsullied'. And in the same *Chapter* he adds that 'A Man of Probity has always a Reserve in his Freedoms, and Converses within the Rules of Modesty and Character. And that Mirth at the expence of Virtue is an Over-purchase, *Nimium enim risus pretium est, si probitatis impendio constat.*'

De Mor. Lib. 10. cap. 2.

Institut. Lib. 6. c. 3.

Thus we see how these great *Masters* qualify Diversion, and tie it up to *Provisoes* and Conditions. Indeed, to

make *Delight* the main business of *Comedy* is an unreasonable and dangerous Principle. It opens the way to all Licentiousness, and Confounds the distinction between Mirth and Madness. For if Diversion is the *Chief End*, it must be had at any Price. No serviceable Expedient must be refused, tho' never so scandalous. And thus the worst Things are said, and the best abus'd; Religion is insulted, and the most serious Matters turn'd into Ridicule. As if the Blindside of an Audience ought to be caress'd, and their Folly and Atheism entertain'd in the first Place: Yes, if the Palate is pleas'd, no matter tho' the Body is Poyson'd! For can one die of an easier Disease than Diversion? But Raillery apart, certainly Mirth and Laughing, without respect to the Cause, are not such supreme Satisfactions. A man has sometimes Pleasure in losing his Wits. Frensy and *Possession* will shake the Lungs and brighten the Face; and yet I suppose they are not much to be coveted. However, now we know the Reason of the Profaness and Obscenity of the *Stage*, of their Hellish Cursing and Swearing, and, in short, of their great Industry to make God and Goodness Contemptible: 'Tis all to Satisfie the Company, and make People Laugh! A most admirable justification! What can be more engaging to an *Audience* then to see a *Poet* thus Atheistically brave? To see him charge up to the Canons Mouth, and defy the Vengeance of Heaven to serve them? Besides, there may be somewhat of Convenience in the Case. To fetch Diversion out of Innocence is no such easy matter. There's no succeeding, it may be, in this method, without Sweat and Drudging. Clean Wit, inoffensive Humour, and handsom Contrivance require Time and Thought. And who would be at this Expence, when the Purchase is so cheap another way? 'Tis possible a *Poet* may not alwaies have Sense enough by him for such an Occasion. And since we are upon supposals,

it may be the *Audience* is not to be gain'd without straining a Point and giving a Loose to Conscience : And when People are sick, are they not to be Humour'd? In fine, We must make them Laugh, right or wrong, for *Delight* is the *Cheif End of Comedy. Delight!* He should have said *Debauchery*: That's the English of the Word and the Consequence of the Practise. But the Original Design of *Comedy* was otherwise : And granting 'twas not so, what then? If the *Ends* of Things are naught, they must be mended. Mischief is the Chief end of Malice ; would it be then a Blemish in Ill Nature to change Temper and relent into Goodness? The Chief *End* of a Madman it may be is to Fire a House; must we not therefore bind him in his Bed? To conclude : If *Delight* without Restraint or Distinction, without Conscience or Shame, is the Supream Law of *Comedy,* 'twere well if we had less on't. Arbitrary Pleasure is more dangerous than Arbitrary Power. Nothing is more Brutal than to be abandon'd to Appetite ; And nothing more wretched than to serve in such a Design. The *Mock-Astrologer,* to clear himself of this Imputation, is glad to give up his Principle at Last. *Least any Man should think* (says He) *that I write this to make Libertinism amiable, or that I cared not to debase the end and Institution of* Comedy (It seems, then, *Delight* is not the Chief end !) *I must farther declare that we make not Vitious Persons Happy, but only as Heaven makes Sinners so,* &c. If this will hold, all's well. But *Heaven* does not forgive without Repentance. Let us see, then, what Satisfaction he requires from his *Wild-Blood,* and what Discipline he puts him under. Why, He helps him to his Mistress, he Marries him to a Lady of Birth and Fortune. And now do you think He has not made him an Example, and punish'd him to some Purpose ! These are frightful Severities ! Who would be vitious when such Terrors hang over his Head? And does *Heaven make Sinners happy* upon these Condi-

tions? Sure, some People have a good Opinion of Vice or a very ill one of Marriage, otherwise they would have Charged the Penance a little more. But I have nothing farther with the *Mock-Astrologer*.

And now, for the Conclusion of a *Chapter*, I shall give some Instances of the *Manners* of the *Stage*, and that with respect to Poetry and Ceremony. *Manners*, in the Language of Poetry is a Propriety of Actions and Persons. To succeed in this business, there must always be a regard had to Age, Sex, and Condition: And nothing put into the Mouths of Persons which disagrees with any of these Circumstances. 'Tis not enough to say a witty Thing, unless it be spoken by a likely Person and upon a Proper occasion. But my Design will lead me to this Subject afterwards, and therefore I shall say no more of it at present, but proceed to apply the Remark.

One instance of Impropriety in *Manners*, both Poetical and Moral, is their making Women, and Women of Quality, talk Smuttily. This I have proved upon them already, and could cite many more places to the same Purpose, were it necessary.

But I shall go on, and give the *Reader* some other examples of Decency, Judgment, and Probability. *Don-Sebastian* will help us in some measure. Here the *Mufti* makes a foolish Speech to the Rabble, and jests upon his own Religion. He tells them, *tho' your Tyrant is a Lawful Emperour, yet your Lawful Emperour is but a Tyrant, ——That your Emperour is a Tyrant is most Manifest, for you were born to be Turks, but he has play'd the Turk with you.* And now is not this Man fit to Manage the *Alcoran*, and to be set up for an Oracle of State? *Captain Tom* should have had this speech by right: But the *Poet* had a farther Design, and any thing is good enough for a *Mufti*. p. 85.

Sebastian, after all the violence of his Repentance, his

grasping at self Murther and Resolutions for the *Cell*, is strangely pleased with the Remembrance of his *Incest*, and
p. 129. wishes the Repetition of it: And *Almeida*, out of her Princely Modesty and singular Compunction, is of the same mind. This is somewhat surprising! *Oedipus* and *Jocasta* in *Sophocles* don't Repent at this Rate. No: The horror of the first Discovery continues upon their Spirits. They never relapse into any fits of Intemperance, nor entertain themselves with a lewd Memory. This sort of Behaviour is not only the more Instructive but more Natural too: It being very unlikely one should wish the Repeating a Crime, when He was almost Distracted at the thoughts on't, tho' 'twas comitted under all the Circumstances of excuse. Now, when Ignorance and meer Mistake are so very disquieting, 'tis very strange if a Man should plague his Mind with the Aggravations of
p. 32. Knowledge. To carry Aversion and Desire in their full strength upon the same Object, To fly and pursue with so much eagerness, is somewhat Unusual.

If we step to the *Spanish Fryar*, He will afford us a Flight worth the observing. 'Tis part of the Addresses of *Torrismond* to *Leonora*:

> *You are so Beautiful,*
> *So wondrous Fair, you justifie Rebellion;*
> *As if that faultless Face could make no Sin,*
> *But Heaven by looking on it must forgive.*

These are strange Compliments! *Torrismond* calls his Queen Rebel to her head, when he was both her General and her Lover. This is powerful Rhetorick to Court a Queen with! Enough, one would think, to have made the Affair desperate! But he has a Remedy at hand. The *Poets Nostrum* of Profaness cures all. He does as good as tell Her she may Sin as much as she has a mind to. Her Face is a Protection to her Conscience: For Heaven is under a necessity to forgive a Handsom

Woman. To say all this ought to be pass'd over in *Torrismond* on the score of his Passion is to make the Excuse more scandalous than the Fault, if possible. Such Raptures are fit only for *Bedlam*, or a place which I shan't name. *Love Triumphant* will furnish another Rant not altogether inconsiderable. Here *Celadea*, a Maiden Lady, when she was afraid her Spark would be married to another, calls out presently for a *Chaos*. She is for pulling the World about her ears, tumbling all the Elements together, and expostulates with Heaven for making Humane Nature otherwise than it should have been :

> *Great Nature, break thy chain that links together* *p.* 52.
> *The Fabrick of this Globe, and make a Chaos,*
> *Like that within my Soul.*

Now, to my fancy, if she had call'd for a *Chair* instead of a *Chaos*, trip'd off, and kept her folly to her self, the Woman had been much wiser. And since we have shown our Skill in vaulting on the High Ropes, a little *Tumbling* on the *Stage* may not do amiss for variety.

Now, then, for a jest or two. *Don Gomez* shall begin. *Spanish Fryar, p.* 36.
And here he'le give us a Gingle upon the double meaning of a word :

I think, says *Dominick* the Fryar, *it was my good Angel that sent me hither so opportunely. Gomez* suspects him brib'd for no creditable business, and answers :

Gom. *Ay, whose good Angels sent you hither, that you know best, Father.*

These *Spaniards* will entertain us with more of this fine Raillery. Colonel *Sancho*, in *Love Triumphant*, has a great stroak at it. He says his Bride, *Dalinda*, is no more *p.* 70.
Dalinda, but *Dalilah* the *Philistine*. This Colonel, as great a Soldier as he is, is quite puzzled at a *Herald*. He *thinks they call him* Herod, *or some such Jewish Name*. Here you *p.* 61.
have a good Officer spoil'd for a miserable jest. And yet, after all, this *Sancho*, tho' he can't pronounce *Herald*,

knows what 'tis to be *Laconick*, which is somewhat more
Eunuch. out of his way. *Thraso*, in *Terence*, was a man of the same size in Sense, but for all that he does not quibble.
King Arth. p. 2. *Albanact*, Captain of the Guards, is much about as witty as *Sancho*. It seems *Emmeline*, Heiress to the Duke of *Cornwal*, was Blind. *Albanact* takes the rise of his Thought from hence; And observes *that as Blind as she is, Coswald would have no blind Bargain of her.* *Carlos* tells
Love Trium. p. 26. *Sancho* he is sure of his Mistress and *has no more to do but to take out a License.*

Sancho replies, *Indeed, I have her License for it.* *Carlos* is somewhat angry at this Gingle, and cries, *what, quibling too in your Prosperity?* Adversity, it seems, is the only time for *punning*. Truly I think so too. For 'tis a sign a Man is much Distress'd when he flies to such an Expedient. However, *Carlos* needed not to have been so touchy: For He can stoop as low himself upon occasion. We must know then that *Sancho* had made Himself a Hunch'd Back, to counterfeit the *Conde Alonzo*. The two Colonels, being in the same Disguise, were just upon the edg of a Quarrel. After some Preliminaries in Railing, *Sancho* cries, *Don't provoke me; I am mischevously bent.*

Carlos replies, *Nay, you are* Bent *enough, in Conscience, but I have a* Bent *Fist for Boxing.* Here you have a brace of Quibbles started in a Line and a half. And, which is worst of all, they come from *Carlos*, from a *Character* of Sense; And therefore the Poet, not the *Soldier*, must answer for them.

I shall now give the *Reader* a few Instances of the Courtship of the *Stage*, and how decently they treat the Women, and *Quality* of both *Sexes*. The *Women*, who are secured from Affronts by Custom, and have a Privilege for Respect, are sometimes but roughly saluted by these Men of Address. And to bar the Defence, this Coarseness does not alwaies come from Clowns and Women-

haters, but from *Persons* of Figure, neither singular nor ill Bred. And, which is still worse, The Satir falls on blindly without Distinction, and strikes at the whole *Sex.*

Enter *Raymond*, a Noble-man, in the *Spanish Fryar*: *p.* 47.

O Vertue! Vertue! What art thou become,
That men should leave thee for that Toy, a woman,
Made from the dross and refuse of a Man?
Heaven took him sleeping when he made her too;
Had Man been waking, he had ne'er consented.

I did not know before that a Man's Dross lay in his *Ribs*; I believe sometimes it lies Higher. But the Philosophy, the Religion, and the Ceremony of these Lines are too tender to be touched. *Creon*, a Prince in *Oedipus*, *Oedip. p.* 3. rails in General at the *Sex*, and at the same time is violently in Love with *Euridice.* This upon the Matter is just as natural as 'tis Civil. If any one would understand what the *Curse of all tender hearted Women is, Belmour* will *Old Batch. p.* 41. inform him. What is it then? 'Tis the *Pox.* If this be true, the Women had need lay in a stock of ill Nature betimes. It seems 'tis their only preservative. It guards their Virtue and their Health, and is all they have to trust to. *Sharper*, another Man of Sense in this *Play*, talks much at the same rate. *Belinda* would know of him *where he got that excellent Talent of Railing?*

Sharp. *Madam, the Talent was Born with me.——I con-* *p.* 35. *fess I have taken care to improve it, to qualifie me for the Society of Ladies. Horner*, a Topping *Character* in the *Country Wife*, is advised to *avoid Women, and hate them as they do him. He Answers:*

Because I do hate them, and would hate them yet more, I'll *p.* 22. *frequent e'm; you may see by Marriage, nothing makes a Man hate a Woman more than her Constant Conversation.* There is still something more Coarse upon the *Sex* spoken by *Dorax*, *Don Sebast. p.* 5. but it is a privileged Expression, and as such I must leave it. The *Relapse* mends the Contrivance of the Satir, refines

upon the Manner, and to make the Discourse the more probable, obliges the Ladies to abuse themselves. And because I should be loath to tire the *Reader*, *Berinthia* shall close the Argument. This Lady, having undertook the Employment of a *Procuress*, makes this remark upon it to her self:

Berinth. *So here is fine work! But there was no avoiding it.—Besides, I begin to Fancy there may be as much Pleasure in carrying on another Bodies Intrigue as ones own. This is at least certain: It exercises almost all the Entertaining Faculties of a Woman. For there is Employment for Hypocrisie, Invention, Deceit, Flattery, Mischief, and Lying.*

Let us now see what Quarter the *Stage* gives to *Quality*. And here we shall find them extreamly free and familiar. They dress up the *Lords* in Nick Names, and expose them in *Characters* of Contempt. *Lord Froth* is explain'd a *Solemn Coxcomb*; And *Lord Rake* and *Lord Foplington* give you their Talent in their Title. Lord *Plausible*, in the *Plain Dealer*, Acts a ridiculous Part, but is with all very civil. He tells *Manly*, *he never attempted to abuse any Person.* The other answers, *What! you were afraid? Manly* goes on, and declares *He would call a Rascal by no other Title, tho' his Father had left him a Dukes.* That is, he would call a Duke a Rascal. This, I confess, is very much *Plain Dealing*. Such Freedoms would appear but odly in Life, especially without Provocation. I must own the *Poet* to be an Author of good Sense; But under favour, these jests, if we may call them so, are somewhat high Season'd; the Humour seems overstrain'd, and the *Character* push'd too far. To proceed: *Mustapha* was selling *Don Alvarez* for a Slave. The Merchant asks *what Virtues he has. Mustapha* replies, *Virtues, quoth ah! He is of a great Family and Rich; what other Virtues would'st thou have in a Nobleman?* Don *Carlos*, in *Love Triumphant*, stands for a Gentleman and a Man of Sense, and out-throws

Double Dealer, Person. Dram. Relapse. Provok'd Wife. *p.* 4.

p. 2.

Don Sebast. *p.* 16.

Mustapha a Bars Length. He tells us *Nature has given* Sancho *an empty Noddle, but Fortune in revenge has fill'd his Pockets: just a Lords Estate in Land and Wit.* This is a handsom Compliment to the Nobility! And my Lord *Salisbury* had no doubt of it a good Bargain of the *Dedication. Teresa's* general Description of a Countess is considerable in its Kind: But only 'tis in no Condition to appear. In the *Relapse,* Sir *Tunbelly,* who had Mistaken Young *Fashion* for Lord *Foplington,* was afterwards undeceiv'd, and before the surprize was quite over, puts the Question, *is it then possible that this should be the true Lord* Foplington *at last?* The Nobleman removes the scruple with great Civility and Discretion! *Lord* Fopl. *Why, what do you see in his Face to make you doubt of it? Sir, without presuming to have an extraordinary Opinion of my Figure, give me leave to tell you, if you had seen as many Lords as I have done, you would not think it Impossible a Person of a worse Taille then mine might be a Modern Man of Quality.*

p. 17. *Don Quix. part* 2 *p.* 37. *Relapse, p.* 84.

I'm sorry to hear *Modern Quality* degenerates so much. But, by the way, these Liberties are altogether new. They are unpractised by the Latin *Comedians,* and by the *English* too till very lately, as the *Plain Dealer* observes. And as for *Moliere* in *France,* he pretends to fly his Satir no higher than a Marquis.

p. 24. *L'Ombre de Moliere.*

And has our *Stage* a particular Privilege? Is their *Charter* inlarg'd, and are they on the same Foot of Freedom with the *Slaves* in the *Saturnalia*? Must all Men be handled alike? Must their Roughness be needs play'd upon Title? And can't they lash the Vice without pointing upon the *Quality*? If, as Mr. *Dryden* rightly defines it, a *Play ought to be a just Image of Humane Nature,* Why are not the Decencies of Life and the Respects of Conversation observ'd? Why must the Customes of Countries be Cross'd upon, and the Regards of

Essay Dram. poet. p. 5.

Honour overlook'd? What necessity is there to kick the *Coronets* about the *Stage*, and to make a Man a Lord only in order to make him a Coxcomb? I hope the *Poets* don't intend to revive the old Project of Levelling, and *Vote* down the House of *Peers*. In earnest, the *Play-house* is an admirable School of Behaviour! This is their way of managing Ceremony, distinguishing Degree, and Entertaining the *Boxes*! But I shall leave them at present to the Enjoyment of their Talent, and proceed to another Argument.

⟨CHAP. V.⟩

Section III.

Remarks upon the Relapse.

THE *Relapse* shall follow *Don Quixot*, upon the account of some Alliance between them. And because this *Author* swaggers so much in his *Preface*, and seems to look big upon his Performance, I shall spend a few more thoughts than ordinary upon his *Play*, and examine it briefly in the *Fable*, the *Moral*, the *Characters*, *&c.* The Fable I take to be as follows:

Fashion, *a Lewd, Prodigal younger Brother, is reduced to extremity. Upon his arrival from his Travels, he meets with* Coupler, *an old sharping Match-maker. This Man puts him upon a project of cheating his Elder Brother, Lord* Foplington, *of a rich Fortune. Young* Fashion, *being refused a Summ of Money by his Brother, goes into* Couplers *Plot, bubbles Sir* Tunbelly *of his Daughter*, and makes *himself Master of a fair Estate.*

From the Form and Constitution of the *Fable*, I observe

1*st.* That there is a *Misnommer* in the Title. The *Play* should not have been call'd the *Relapse, or Virtue in Danger*. *Lovelace* and *Amanda*, from whose *Characters* these Names are drawn, are Persons of Inferiour Con-

sideration. *Lovelace* sinks in the middle of the *Fourth* Act, and we hear no more of him till towards the End of the *Fifth*, where he enters once more, but then 'tis as *Cato* did the Senate house, only to go out again. And as for *Amanda*, she has nothing to do but to stand a shock of Courtship, and carry off her Virtue. This, I confess, is a great task in the *Play-house*, but no main matter in the *Play*.

The *Intrigue* and the *Discovery*, the great Revolution and success, turns upon *Young Fashion*. He, without Competition, is the Principal Person in the *Comedy*. And therefore the *Younger Brother*, or the *Fortunate Cheat*, had been much a more proper Name. Now when a *Poet* can't rig out a *Title Page*, 'tis but a bad sign of his holding out to the *Epilogue*.

2*ly*. I observe the *Moral* is vitious: It points the wrong way, and puts the *Prize* into the wrong Hand. It seems to make *Lewdness* the reason of *Desert*, and gives *Young Fashion* a second Fortune, only for Debauching away his First. A short view of his *Character* will make good this Reflection. To begin with him: He confesses himself a *Rake*, swears and Blasphemes, Curses and Challenges his Elder Brother, cheats him of his Mistress, and gets him laid by the Heels in a Dog-Kennel. And what was the ground of all this unnatural quarrelling and outrage? Why, the main of it was only because Lord *Foplington* refused to supply his Luxury and make good his Extravagance. This *Young Fashion*, after all, is the *Poets* Man of Merit. He provides a *Plot* and a Fortune on purpose for him. To speek freely, A Lewd Character seldom wants good Luck in *Comedy*. So that when ever you see a thorough Libertine, you may always swear he is in a rising way, and that the *Poet* intends to make him a great Man. In short, This *Play* perverts the End of *Comedy*: Which, as Monsieur *Rapin* observes, ought to regard

Reflect. &c. p. 131.

Reformation and publick Improvement. But the *Relapser* had a more fashionable Fancy in his Head. His *Moral* holds forth this notable Instruction:

1*st.* That all *Younger Brothers* should be careful to run out their Circumstances as Fast and as Ill as they can. And when they have put their Affairs in this posture of Advantage, they may conclude themselves in the high Road to Wealth and Success. For, as *Fashion* Blasphemously applies it, *Providence takes care of Men of Merit.*

Relapse, p. 19.

2*ly.* That when a Man is press'd, his business is not to be govern'd by Scruples, or formalize upon Conscience and Honesty. The quickest Expedients are the best; For in such cases the Occasion justifies the Means, and a Knight of the *Post* is as good as one of the *Garter*. In the 3*d* Place, it may not be improper to look a little into the *Plot*. Here the *Poet* ought to play the Politician if ever. This part should have some stroaks of Conduct and strains of Invention more then ordinary. There should be something that is admirable and unexpected to surprize the Audience. And all this Finess must work by gentle degrees, by a due preparation of *Incidents*, and by Instruments which are probable. 'Tis Mr. *Rapins* remark that without probability *every Thing is lame and Faulty.* Where there is no pretence to *Miracle* and *Machine*, matters must not exceed the force of Beleif. To produce effects without proportion and likelyhood in the Cause is Farce and Magick, and looks more like Conjuring than Conduct. Let us examine the *Relapser* by these Rules. To discover his *Plot*, we must lay open somewhat more of the *Fable*:

Reflect. p. 133.

'Lord *Foplington*, a Town Beau, had agreed to Marry the Daughter of Sir *Tun-belly Clumsey*, a Country Gentleman, who lived Fifty miles from *London*. Notwithstanding this small distance, the Lord had never seen his Mistress,

nor the Knight his Son in Law. Both parties, out of their great Wisdom, leave the treating the Match to *Coupler*. When all the preliminaries of Settlement were adjusted, and Lord *Foplington* expected by Sir *Tun-belly* in a few days, *Coupler* betrays his Trust to *Young Fashion*. He advises him to go down before his Brother: To Counterfeit his Person, and pretend that the strength of his Inclinations brought him thither before his time and without his Retinue. And to make him pass upon Sir *Tun-belly*, *Coupler* gives him his *Letter*, which was to be Lord *Foplingtons* Credential. *Young Fashion*, thus provided, posts down to Sir *Tun-belly*, is received for Lord *Foplington*, and by the help of a little Folly and Knavery in the Family Marries the young Lady without her Fathers Knowledge and a week before the Appointment.'

This is the Main of the Contrivance. The Counterturn in Lord *Foplingtons* appearing afterwards, and the Support of the main *Plot* by *Bulls* and *Nurses* attesting the Marriage, contain's little of Moment. And here we may observe that Lord *Foplington* has an unlucky Disagreement in his *Character*. This Misfortune sits hard upon the credibility of the Design. 'Tis true he was Formal and Fantastick, Smitten with Dress and Equipage, and it may be vapour'd by his Perfumes; But his Behaviour is far from that of an *p.* 27. Ideot. This being granted, 'tis very unlikely this Lord, with his five Thousand pounds *per annum*, should leave the choise of his Mistress to *Coupler*, and take her Person and Fortune upon *Content*. To court thus blindfold and by *Proxy* does not agree with the Method of an Estate nor the Niceness of a *Beau*. However, the *Poet* makes him engage Hand over Head, without so much as the sight of *p.* 79. her Picture. His going down to Sir *Tun-belly* was as extraordinary as his Courtship. He had never seen this Gentleman. He must know him to be beyond Measure suspicious, and there was no Admittance without *Couplers*

Letter. This *Letter*, which was the Key to the Castle, he forgot to take with him, and tells you *'twas stolen by his Brother Tam.* And for his part he neither had the Discretion to get another, nor yet to produce that written by him
Ibid. to Sir *Tun-belly*. Had common Sense been consulted upon this Occasion, the *Plot* had been at an End, and the *Play* had sunk in the Fourth *Act*. The Remainder subsists purely upon the strength of Folly, and of Folly altogether improbable and out of *Character*. The *Salvo* of Sir *John Friendly's* appearing at last and vouching for Lord *Foplington*
p. 81. won't mend the matter. For, as the *Story* informs us, Lord *Foplington* never depended on this Reserve: He knew nothing of this Gentleman being in the Country, nor where he Lived. The truth is, Sir *John* was left in *Town*, and the Lord had neither concerted his journey with him nor
p. 83. engaged his Assistance.

Let us now see how Sir *Tun-belly* hangs together. This Gentleman the *Poet* makes a *Justice* of *Peace* and a *Deputy Lieutenant*, and seats him fifty Miles from London: But by his Character you would take him for one of *Hercules's* Monsters, or some Gyant in *Guy* of *Warwick*. His Behaviour is altogether *Romance*, and has nothing agreeable to Time or Country. When *Fashion* and *Lory* went down, they find the Bridge drawn up, the Gates barr'd, and the Blunderbuss cock'd at the first civil Question. And when Sir *Tun-belly* had notice of this formidable Appearance, he Sallies out with the *Posse* of the Family, and marches against a Couple of Strangers with a *Life Guard* of Halberds, Sythes, and Pitchforks. And to make sure work, Young *Hoyden* is lock'd up at the first approach of the Enemy. Here you have prudence and wariness to the excess of Fable and Frensy. And yet this mighty man of suspition trusts *Coupler* with the Disposal of his only Daughter, and his Estate into the Bargain. And what was this *Coupler*? Why, a sharper by *Character*, and little

better by Profession. Farther: Lord *Foplington* and the Knight are but a days Journey asunder, and yet by their treating by Proxy and Commission one would Fancy a dozen Degrees of *Latitude* betwixt them. And as for Young *Fashion*, excepting *Couplers* Letter, he has all imaginable Marks of Imposture upon him. He comes before his Time and without the Retinue expected, and has nothing of the Air of Lord *Foplington's* Conversation. When Sir *Tunbelly* ask'd him, *pray where are your Coaches and Servants, my Lord?* He makes a trifling excuse: *Sir, that I might give you and your Fair Daughter a proof how impatient I am to be nearer akin to you, I left my Equipage to follow me, and came away Post, with only one Servant.* To be in such a Hurry of Inclination for a Person he never saw is somewhat strange! Besides, 'tis very unlikely Lord *Foplington* should hazard his Complexion on Horseback, out ride his Figure, and appear a Bridegroom in *Deshabille.* You may as soon perswade a Peacock out of his Train as a *Beau* out of his Equipage, especially upon such an Occasion. Lord *Foplington* would scarsely speak to his Brother, just come a *Shore*, till the Grand Commitee of *Taylors, Seamtresses, &c.*, was dispatch'd. Pomp and Curiosity were this Lords Inclination; why then should he mortifie without necessity, make his first Approaches thus out of Form, and present himself to his Mistress at such Disadvantage? And as this is the Character of Lord *Foplington*, so 'tis reasonable to suppose Sir *Tunbelly* acquainted with it. An enquiry into the Humour and management of a Son in Law is very natural and Customary. So that we can't without Violence to Sense suppose Sir *Tunbelly* a Stranger to Lord *Foplington*'s Singularities. These Reasons were enough in all Conscience to make Sir *Tunbelly* suspect a Juggle, and that *Fashion* was no better than a Counterfeit. Why then was the *Credential* swallow'd without chewing; why was not *Hoyden* lock'd up, and a pause made for farther Enquiry? Did this

p. 59.

p. 11.

Justice never hear of such a Thing as Knavery, or had he ever greater reason to guard against it? More wary steps might well have been expected from Sir *Tunbelly*. To run from one extream of Caution to another of Credulity is highly improbable. In short, either Lord *Foplington* and Sir *Tunbelly* are Fools, or they are not. If they are, where lies the Cunning in over-reaching them? What Conquest can there be without Opposition? If they are not Fools, why does the *Poet* make them so? Why is their Conduct so gross, so particolour'd, and inconsistent? Take them either way, and the *Plot* miscarries. The first supposition makes it dull, and the later, incredible. So much for the *Plot*. I shall now in the 4*th* Place touch briefly upon the *Manners*.

The *Manners*, in the Language of the *Stage*, have a signification somewhat particular. *Aristotle* and *Rapin* call them the Causes and Principles of Action. They are formed upon the Diversities of Age and Sex, of Fortune, Capacity, and Education. The propriety of *Manners* consists in a Conformity of Practise and Principle, of Nature and Behaviour. For the purpose: An old Man must not appear with the Profuseness and Levity of Youth; A Gentleman must not talk like a Clown, nor a Country Girl like a Town Jilt. And when the *Characters* are feign'd, 'tis *Horace*'s Rule to keep them Uniform, and consistent, and agreeable to their first setting out. The *Poet* must be careful to hold his *Persons* tight to their *Calling* and pretentions. He must not shift and shuffle their Understandings, Let them skip from Wits to Blockheads nor from Courtiers to Pedants. On the other hand, If their business is playing the Fool, keep them strictly to their Duty, and never indulge them in fine Sentences. To manage otherwise is to desert *Nature*, and makes the *Play* appear monstrous and Chimerical. So that instead of an *Image of Life*, 'tis rather an Image of Impossibility. To apply some of these remarks to the *Relapser*:

The fine *Berinthia*, one of the Top-Characters, is impudent and Profane. *Lovelace* would engage her Secrecy, and bids her Swear. She answers, *I do.*

Lov. *By what?*

Berinth. *By Woman.*

Lov. *That's Swearing by my Deity; do it by your own, or I shan't believe you.*

Berinth. *By Man, then.* *p.* 47.

This Lady promises *Worthy* her Endeavours to corrupt *Amanda*, and then They make a Profane jest upon the *p.* 51. Office. In the progress of the *Play*, after a great deal of Lewd Discourse with *Lovelace*, *Berinthia* is carried off into *p.* 74. a Closet, and Lodged in a *Scene* of Debauch. Here is Decency and Reservedness to a great exactness! Monsieur *Rapin* blames *Ariosto* and *Tasso* for representing two of their Women over free and airy. These *Poets*, says he, *Reflect. rob Women of their Character, which is Modesty.* Mr. *Rymer* *p.* 40. is of the same Opinion. His words are these: *Nature knows nothing in the Manners which so properly and particularly distinguish a Woman as her Modesty.—An impudent Woman is fit only to be kicked and expos'd in Comedy.* *Tragedies of the last Age consider'd, &c., p.* 113, 114.

Now, *Berinthia* appears in *Comedy*, 'tis true; but neither to be *kick'd* nor *expos'd*. She makes a Considerable Figure, has good Usage, keeps the best Company, and goes off without Censure or Disadvantage. Let us now take a Turn or two with Sir *Tun-belly's* Heiress of 1500 pounds a year. This Young Lady swears, talks smut, and is upon the matter just as rag-manner'd as *Mary the Buxsome*. 'Tis plain the *Relapser* copyed Mr. *Durfey's* Original, which is a sign he was somewhat Pinch'd. Now, this *Character* was no great Beauty in *Buxsome*; But it becomes the Knights Daughter much worse. *Buxsome* was a poor Pesant, which made her Rudeness more natural and expected. But *Deputy Lieutenants* Children don't use to appear with the Behaviour of Beggars. To breed all

People alike, and make no distinction between a *Seat* and a *Cottage*, is not over artful, nor very ceremonious to the Country Gentlemen. The *Relapser* gives *Miss* a pretty Soliloquy; I'll transcribe it for the *Reader*:

p. 59. She swears by her Maker, *'tis well I have a Husband a coming, or I'de Marry the Baker, I would so. No body can knock at the Gate, but presently I must be lock'd up; and here's the Young Gray-hound —— can run loose about the House all day long, she can, 'tis very well!* Afterwards her Language is too Lewd to be quoted. Here is a Compound of Ill Manners and Contradiction! Is this a good Resemblance of Quality, a Description of a great Heiress, and the effect of a Cautious Education? By her Coarsness you would think her Bred upon a Common; and by her Confidence, in the Nursery of the *Play-house*. I suppose the *Relapser* Fancies the calling her *Miss Hoyden* is enough to justifie her Ill Manners. By his favour, this is a Mistake. To represent her thus unhewn, he should have suited her Condition to her Name a little better. For there is no charm in *Words* as to matters of Breeding: An unfashionable Name won't make a Man a Clown. Education is not form'd upon Sounds and Syllables, but upon Circumstances and Quality. So that if he was resolv'd to have shown her thus unpolish'd, he should have made her keep *Sheep*, or brought her up at the *Wash-Boul.*

p. 61. Sir *Tun-Belly* accosts Young *Fashion* much at the same rate of Accomplishment. My Lord, —— *I humbly crave leave to bid you Welcome in a Cup of Sack-wine.* One would imagine the *Poet* was overdozed before he gave the *Justice* a Glass. For *Sack-wine* is too low for a *Petty Constable*. This peasantly expression agrees neither with the Gentlemans Figure nor with the rest of his Behaviour. I find we should have a Creditable *Magistracy*, if the *Relapser* had the Making them. Here the *Characters* are pinch'd in Sense, and stinted to short Allowance. At an other

time they are over-indulged, and treated above Expectation.

For the purpose: Vanity and Formalizing is Lord *Foplingtons* part. To let him speak without Aukwardness and Affectation is to put him out of his Element. There must be Gumm and stiffening in his Discourse to make it natural. However, the *Relapser* has taken a fancy to his Person and given him some of the most Gentile raillery in the whole *Play*. To give an Instance or two: This Lord, in Discourse with *Fashion*, forgets his Name, flies out into Sense and smooth expression, out talks his Brother, and, abating the starch'd Similitude of a *Watch*, discovers nothing of Affectation for almost a *Page* together. He relapses into the same Intemperance of good Sense in an other Dialogue between him and his Brother. I shall cite a little of it: *p.* 42.

Y. Fash. *Unless you are so kind to assist me in redeeming my Annuity, I know no Remedy but to go take a Purse.*

L. Fopl. *Why, Faith,* Tam,——*to give you my Sense of the Thing, I do think taking a Purse the best Remedy in the World; for if you succeed, you are releiv'd that way; if you are taken——you are reliev'd t'other.* *p.* 43.

Fashion, being disappointed of a supply, quarrels his Elder Brother, and calls him *the Prince of Coxcombs.* *p.* 44.

L. Fopl. *Sir, I am proud of being at the Head of so prevailing a party.*

Y. Fash. *Will nothing then provoke thee? draw, Coward!*

L. Fopl. *Look you,* Tam, *your poverty makes your Life so burdensome to you, you would provoke me to a Quarrel, in hopes to slip through my Lungs into my Estate, or else to get your self run through the Guts to put an end to your Pain. But I shall disappoint you in both,* &c.

This Drolling has too much Spirit, the Air of it is too free and too handsomly turn'd, for Lord *Foplingtons* Character. I grant the *Relapser* could not afford to lose

these Sentences. The Scene would have suffer'd by the Omission. But then he should have contriv'd the matter so, as that they might have been spoken by Young *Fashion* in *Asides*, or by some other more proper Person. To go on: Miss *Hoyden* sparkles too much in Conversation. The *Poet* must needs give her a shining Line or two, which serves only to make the rest of her dullness the more remarkable. Sir *Tun-belly* falls into the same Misfortune of a Wit, and rallies above the force of his Capacity: But the place having a mixture of Profaness, I shall forbear to cite it. Now, to what purpose should a Fools Coat be embroider'd? Finery in the wrong place is but expensive Ridiculousness. Besides, I don't perceive the *Relapser* was in any Condition to be thus liberal. And when a *Poet* is not overstock'd, to squander away his Wit among his *Block-heads* is meer Distraction. His men of Sense will smart for this prodigality. *Lovelace*, in his discourse of *Friendship*, shall be the first Instance. *Friendship* (says he) *is said to be a plant of tedious growth, its Root composed of tender* Fibers, nice in their Tast, &c. By this Description the Palate of a *Fiber* should be somewhat more *nice* and distinguishing then the *Poets* Judgment. Let us examin some more of his Witty People. Young *Fashion* fancies, by *Misses* forward Behaviour, she would have a whole *Kennel* of *Beaux* after her at *London*. And then, *Hey to the Park, and the Play, and the Church, and the Devil!* Here I conceive the ranging of the Period is amiss. For if he had put the *Play* and the *Devil* together, the Order of Nature and the Air of Probability had been much better observ'd.

p. 64. *At top.*

p. 85.

p. 64.

Afterwards *Coupler*, being out of Breath in coming up stairs to *Fashion*, asks him, *why the —— canst thou not lodge upon the Ground-floor*?

Y. Fash. *Because I love to lye as near Heaven as I can.* One would think a Spark, just come off his Travels, and

had made the *Tour* of *Italy* and *France*, might have rallied with a better Grace! However, if he lodg'd in a *Garret*, 'tis a good *Local* jest. I had almost forgot one pretty remarkable Sentence of *Fashion* to *Lory*. *I shall shew thee* (says he) *the excess of my Passion by being very calm.* Now, since this *Gentleman* was in a vein of talking Philosophy to his Man, I'm sorry he broke of so quickly. Had he gone on and shown him the *Excess* of a Storm and no Wind stirring, the Topick had been spent and the Thought improv'd to the utmost. *p.* 15.

Let us now pass on to *Worthy*, the *Relapsers* fine Gentleman. This Spark sets up for Sense and Address, and is to have nothing of Affectation or Conscience to spoil his Character. However, to say no more of him, he grows Foppish in the last *Scene*, and courts *Amanda* in Fustian and Pedantry. First, He gives his Periods a turn of Versification, and talks *Prose* to her in *Meeter*. Now, this is just as agreeable as it would be to *Ride* with one Leg and *Walk* with the other. But let him speak for himself. His first business is to bring *Amanda* to an Aversion for her Husband; And therefore he perswades her to *Rouse up that Spirit Women ought to bear, and slight your God if he neglects his Angel.* He goes on with his Orisons: *With Arms of Ice receive his Cold Embraces, and keep your Fire for those that come in Flames.* Fire and Flames is Mettal upon Mettal: 'Tis false Heraldry. *Extend the Arms of Mercy to his Aid. His zeal may give him Title to your Pity, altho' his Merit cannot claim your Love.* Here you have *Arms* brought in again by Head and shoulders. I suppose the design was to keep up the Situation of the *Allegory*. But the latter part of the Speech is very Pithy. He would have her resign her Vertue out of Civility, and abuse her Husband on Principles of good Nature. *Worthy* pursues his point, and Rises in his Address. He falls into a Fit of Dissection, and hopes to gain his Mistress by Cutting his Throat. He is *p.* 99. *Ibid.*

for *Ripping up his Faithful Breast* to prove the Reality of his Passion. Now, when a Man Courts with his Heart in his Hand, it must be great Cruelty to refuse him! No Butcher could have Thought of a more moving Expedient! However, *Amanda* continues obstinate, and is not in the usual Humour of the *Stage*. Upon this, like a well bred Lover, he seizes her by Force and threatens to Kill her. *Nay, struggle not, for all's in vain: or Death or Victory;* *p.* 100. *I am determin'd.* In this rencounter the Lady proves too nimble, and slips through his Fingers. Upon this disappointment, he cries, *there's Divinity about her, and she has dispenc'd some Portion on't to me.* His Passion is Metamorphos'd in the Turn of a hand. He is refin'd into a *Platonick* Admirer, and goes off as like a *Town Spark* as you would wish. And so much for the *Poets* fine Gentleman.

I should now examine the *Relapser's Thoughts and Expressions*, which are two other Things of Consideration in a *Play*. The *Thoughts* or *Sentiments are the Expressions of the Manners as Words are of the Thoughts.* But the view of the *Characters* has in some measure prevented this Enquiry. Leaving this Argument, therefore, I shall consider his *Play* with respect to the

Rapin, Reflect. &c.

Three Unities of Time, Place, and Action.

And here the *Reader* may please to take notice, that the Design of these Rules is to conceal the Fiction of the *Stage*, to make the *Play* appear Natural, and to give it an Air of Reality and *Conversation.*

The largest compass for the first *Unity* is Twenty Four Hours: But a lesser proportion is more regular. To be exact, the Time of the History, or *Fable*, should not exceed that of the *Representation*: Or in other words, the whole Business of the *Play* should not be much longer than the Time it takes up in *Playing.*

The Second *Unity* is that of *Place.* To observe it, the

Scene must not wander from one Town or Country to another. It must continue in the same House, Street, or at farthest in the same City, where it was first laid. The Reason of this Rule depends upon the *First.* Now, the Compass of *Time* being strait, that of *Space* must bear a Correspondent Proportion. Long journeys in *Plays* are impracticable. The Distances of *Place* must be suited to Leisure and Possibility; otherwise the supposition will appear unnatural and absurd. The

Third *Unity* is that of *Action.* It consists in contriving the chief Business of the *Play* single, and making the concerns of one Person distinguishably great above the rest. All the Forces of the *Stage* must, as it were, serve Under one *General*; And the lesser Intrigues, or Underplots, have some Relation to the Main. The very Oppositions must be useful, and appear only to be Conquer'd and Countermin'd. To represent Two considerable Actions independent of each other Destroys the beauty of Subordination, weakens the Contrivance, and dilutes the pleasure. It splits the *Play*, and makes the *Poem* double. He that would see more upon this subject may consult *Corneille.* To bring these Remarks to the Case in hand: And here we may observe how the *Relapser* fails in all the *Rules* above mention'd. *Discours des Trois Unitez, pt. 3d.*

1*st.* His *Play*, by modest Computation, takes up a weeks Work, but five days you must allow it at the lowest. One day must be spent in the First, Second, and part of the Third *Act*, before Lord *Foplington* sets forward to Sir *Tun-belly.* Now, the Length of the Distance, the Pomp of the Retinue, and the Niceness of the Person being consider'd, the journey down and up again cannot be laid under four days. To put this out of doubt, Lord *Foplington* is particularly careful to tell *Coupler* how concern'd he was not to overdrive, *for fear of disordering his Coach-Horses.* The Laws of *Place* are no better observ'd than those of

p. 83.

Time. In the Third *Act* the *Play* is in *Town,* in the Fourth *Act* 'tis stroll'd Fifty Miles off, and in the Fifth *Act* in *London* again. Here *Pegasus* stretches it to purpose! This *Poet* is fit to ride a Match with Witches. *Juliana Cox* never Switched a Broom stock with more Expedition! This is exactly

Titus at *Walton Town,* and *Titus* at *Islington.*

One would think, by the probability of matters, the *Plot* had been stolen from Dr. *O⟨ate⟩s.*

The *Poet's* Success in the last *Unity* of *Action* is much the same with the former. *Lovelace, Amanda,* and *Berinthia* have no share in the main Business. These Second rate *Characters* are a detatched Body: Their Interest is perfectly Foreign, and they are neither Friends nor Enemies to the *Plot. Young Fashion* does not so much as see them till the Close of the Fifth *Act,* and then they meet only to fill the *Stage.* And yet these *Persons* are in the *Poets* account very considerable; Insomuch that he has misnamed his *Play* from the Figure of two of them. This strangness of *Persons,* distinct Company, and inconnexion of Affairs destroys the Unity of the *Poem.* The contrivance is just as wise as it would be to cut a Diamond in two. There is a loss of Lustre in the Division. Increasing the Number abates the Value; and by making it more, you make it less.

Thus far I have examin'd the *Dramatick* Merits of the *Play.* And upon enquiry it appears a Heap of Irregularities. There is neither Propriety in the *Name,* nor Contrivance in the *Plot,* nor Decorum in the *Characters.* 'Tis a thorough Contradiction to Nature, and impossible in *Time* and *Place.* Its *Shining Graces,* as the Author calls them, are *Blasphemy* and *Baudy,* together with a mixture of *Oaths* and *Cursing.* Upon the whole, The *Relapser's* Judgment and his Morals are pretty well adjusted. The *Poet* is not much better than the *Man.* As for the

Pref.

Profane part, 'tis hideous and superlative: But this I have consider'd elsewhere. All that I shall observe here is that the Author was sensible of this Objection. His Defence in his *Preface* is most wretched: He pretends to know nothing of the Matter, and that *'tis all Printed*; Which only proves his Confidence equal to the rest of his Virtues. To out-face Evidence in this manner is next to the affirming there's no such sin as *Blasphemy*, which is the greatest Blasphemy of all. His Apology consists in railing at the *Clergy*,—a certain sign of ill Principles and ill Manners. This He does at an unusual rate of Rudeness and Spite. He calls them the Saints with Screw'd *Faces and wry Mouths*. And after a great deal of scurrilous Abuse, too gross to be mention'd, he adds: *If any Man happens to be offended at a story of a Cock and a Bull, and a Priest and a Bull-dog, I beg his Pardon*, &c. This is brave *Bear-Garden* Language! The *Relapser* would do well to transport his Muse to *Samourgan* *. There 'tis likely he might find Leisure to lick his *Abortive Brat* into shape; And meet with proper Business for his Temper, and encouragement for his Talent.

See Chap. 2d.

Pref.

* *An Academy in Lithuania, for the Education of Bears.* *Pere Aurill, Voyage en Divers E'tats, &c., f.* 240.

GEORGE GRANVILLE
LORD LANSDOWNE

AN ESSAY UPON UNNATURAL FLIGHTS IN POETRY

1701

Concerning Unnatural Flights in Poetry.

AS when some Image of a charming face,
In living Paint, An Artist tries to trace,
He carefully consults each beauteous line,
Adjusting to his Object his design;
We Praise the Peice, And give the Painter Fame,
But as the bright resemblance speaks the Dame.
Poets are Limners of another kind,
To copy out Idæas in the Mind;
Words are the paint by which their thoughts are shown,
And Nature is their Object to be drawn;
The written Picture we applaud or blame,
But as the just proportions are the same.

Who, driven with ungovernable fire,
Or void of Art, beyond these bounds aspire,
Gygantick forms and monstrous Births alone
Produce, which Nature shockt disdains to own;
By true reflection I would see my face;
Why brings the Fool a magnifying Glass?
Obj. (1) But Poetry in Fiction takes delight,
And mounting up in Figures out of Sight,
Leaves Truth behind in her audacious flight;

Fables and Metaphors that always lie, (2)
And rash Hyperboles, that soar so high, (3)
And every Ornament of Verse, must die.

Mistake me not: No Figures I exclude, *Ans.*
And but forbid Intemperance, not Food;
Who would with care some happy Fiction frame,
So mimicks Truth, it looks the very same,
Not rais'd to force, or feign'd in nature's scorn,
But meant to grace, illustrate, and adorn:
Important Truths still let your Fables hold,
And moral misteries with art unfold;
Ladies and Beaux to Please is all the task,
But the sharp Critick will Instruction ask.

As Veils transparent cover, but not hide,
Such metaphors appear, when right apply'd;
When, thro' the phrase, we plainly see the sense,
Truth, when the meaning 's obvious, will dispense.
The Reader, what in Reason's due, believes,
Nor can we call that false which not deceives.

Hyperboles, so daring and so bold,
Disdaining bounds, Are yet by Rules controul'd;
Above the Clouds, but yet within our sight,
They mount with truth, and make a tow'ring flight;
Presenting things impossible to view,
They wander, thro' incredible, to True;
Falshoods thus mixt, Like metalls are refind,
And Truth, like Silver, leaves the dross behind.

Thus Poetry has ample space to soar,
Nor needs forbidden Regions to explore;
Such Vaunts as his who can with patience bear,
Who thus describes his Hero in the War:

(4) *In heat of Action combats being slain,*
And after death still do's the fight maintain.

Taken from Ariosto.

The noisie Culvering, O're charg'd, lets fly,
And bursts unaiming in the rended sky;
Such frantick flights are like a Mad-mans dream,
And nature suffers in the wild extream.

(5) The Roman Wit, who impiously divides
His Heroe and his Gods to different sides,
I would condemn, but that, in spight of sense,
Th' admiring World still stands in his defence;
How o'ft, Alas! the best of men in vain
Contend for blessings that the worst obtain!
The Gods, permitting Traitors to succeed,
Become not Parties in an impious deed,
And, by the Tyrants Murder, we may find
That *Cato* and the Gods were of a mind.

Thus forcing Truth with such prepostrous praise,
Our Characters we lessen, when we'd raise;
Like Castles built by magick Art in air,
That vanish at approach, such thoughts appear;
But rais'd on Truth, by some judicious hand,
As on a Rock they shall for Ages stand.

Our King return'd, and banisht Peace restor'd,
The Muse ran Mad to see her exil'd Lord;
On the crackt Stage the Bedlam Heroes roar'd,
And scarce cou'd speak one reasonable word;
(6) *Dryden* himself, to please a frantick Age,
Was forc'd to let his judgment stoop to Rage;
To a wild Audience he conform'd his voice,
Comply'd to Custom, but not err'd thro' Choice.
Deem then the Peoples, not the Writer's Sin,
Almanzor's Rage, and Rants of *Maximin*;

That fury spent, in each elaborate Peice
He vies for Fame with ancient *Rome* and *Greece*.

Roscommon first, Then *Mulgrave* rose, Like light,
To clear our Darkness and to guide our flight;
With steady Judgment, and in lofty Sounds,
They gave us patterns, and they set us bounds.
The *Stagyrite* and *Horace* laid aside,
Inform'd by Them, we need no foreign Guide.

Who seek from Poetry a lasting Name,
May in their Lessons learn the road to Fame;
But let the bold Adventurer be sure
That every line the test of Truth endure;
On this Foundation may the Fabrick rise,
Firm and unshaken, till it touch the Skies.

From Pulpits banisht, from the Court, from Love,
Abandon'd Truth seeks shelter in the Grove;
Cherish, ye Muses, the forsaken Fair,
And take into Your Train this Wanderer.

Explanatory Annotations on the foregoing Poem

(1) The Poetic World is nothing but Fiction; Pernassus, Pegasus, and the Muses, pure imagination and Chimæra. But being, however, a system universally agreed on, all that shall be contriv'd or invented upon this Foundation according to Nature shall be reputed as truth: But what so ever shall diminish from, or exceed, the just proportions of Nature, shall be rejected as False, and pass for extravagance, as Dwarfs and Gyants for Monsters.

(2) When *Homer*, mentioning *Achilles*, terms him a Lyon,

this is a metaphor, And the Meaning is obvious and true, tho' the litteral sense be false : The Poet intending thereby to give his Reader some Idæa of the strength and fortitude of his Heroe. Had he said, That Wolf, or that Bear, this had bin false, by presenting an Image not conformable to the Nature, Or Character of a Heroe, &c.

(3) Hyperboles are of diverse sorts, And the manner of introducing them is different. Some are, as it were, Naturaliz'd and establish'd by a Customary way of expression ; as when we say, such a one 's as swift as the wind, whiter then snow, or the like. *Homer*, speaking of *Nireus*, calls him Beauty it self; *Martial* of *Zoilus*, Lewdness it self: such Hiperboles lie indeed, but deceive us not; And therefore *Seneca* terms 'em Lyes that readily conduct our imagination to Truths, and have an intelligible signification, tho' the expression be strain'd beyond credibility. Custom has likewise familiaris'd another way for Hyperboles, for example, by Irony ; as when we say of some very infamous Woman, she 's a Civil person, where the meaning's to be taken in a sense quite opposite to the letter. These few Figures are mention'd only for examples sake ; it will be understood that all others are to be us'd with the like care and discretion.

(4) These lines are taken from *Ariosto*. The Authour need not have travel'd so far from home to fetch nonsense. But he chose rather to correct in the gentlest manner by a foreign Example, hoping that such as are conscious of the like extravagances will take the hint, and secretly reprove themselves. *Quodcumque ostendis mihi sic, incredulus Odi.* It may be possible for some tempers to maintain Rage and indignation to the last gasp : But the Soul and Body once parted, there must necessarily be a determination of Action, &c.

(5) *Victrix Causa deis placuit, sed Victa Catoni.* The consent of so many Ages having establish'd the reputation

of this Line, the Author perhaps may be judg'd too presuming in this attack. But he cou'd not suppose that *Cato*, who is describ'd to have been a Man of strict devotion, and more resembling the Gods than men, would choose any party in opposition to the Gods. The Poet would give us to understand that his Heroe was too generous to accompany the Gods themselves in an unjust Cause. But to represent a Man to be either wiser or juster than God may show the impiety of the Writer, but can add nothing to the lustre of the Heroe, since neither Reason nor Religion will allow it, and it is impossible in nature for a corrupt being to be more excellent than a divine. Besides, success implies permission, and not approbation; to place the Gods always on the thriving side is to make 'em partakers in all successful wickedness. They judge before the conclusion of the Action: The Catastrophe will best determine on which side is Providence: And the Violent death of *Cæsar* acquits the Gods from being Companions of his *Usurpation.*

(6) Mr. *Dryden* in some Prologue has these two Lines:

He's bound to please, not to write well; And knows
There is a mode in Plays as well as Cloaths.

Let the Censurers of Mr. *Dryden* therefore be satisfied that where he has expos'd himself to be criticiz'd, it has been only when he has endeavour'd to follow the fashion, To humour others, and not to please himself. It may likewise be observ'd that at the time when those Characters were form'd, Bullying was altogether the Mode, off the Stage as well as upon it: And tho' that humour is since much abated in the Conversation of the World, yet there remains so far a relish for it that to this day an Audience is never so well pleas'd as when an Actor foams with some extravagant rant: neither can we ever expect a thorow reformation of this Sacrifice to the People, till the writer has some more certain encouragement than the bare profits of a

third day; For those who write to live will be always under a necessity to comply in some measure with the Generality by whose approbation they subsist.

Mr. *Dryden*, for further Satisfaction, in his Epistle Dedicatory to the *Spanish-Fryar* thus censures himself: I remember some Verses of my own *Maximin* and *Almanzor* which cry vengeance upon me for their extravagance, *&c.* All I can say for these passages, which are I hope not many, is that I knew they were bad enough to please, Even when I writ them; But I repent of them among my sins: And if any of their fellows intrude by chance into my present writing, I draw a Stroke over all those *Dalilahs* of the Theatre, and am resolv'd I will Settle my self no reputation by the applause of Fools. 'Tis not that I am mortify'd to all Ambition, but I scorn as much to take it from half-witted Judges, as I should to raise an Estate by cheating of Bubbles. Neither doe I discommend the lofty stile in Tragedy, which is naturally pompous and Magnificent: But nothing is truly sublime, that is not Just and proper.' *Ep. Dedic.* to the *Spanish-Fryar.*

This may serve for a standing Apology for Mr. *Dryden* against all his Criticks; and likewise for an unquestionable Authority to confirm those principles which the Authour of the foregoing Poem has pretended to lay down, *&c.*

NOTES

ROBERT WOLSELEY (1649-1697)

This preface has been transcribed from *Valentinian, a Tragedy, As 'tis Alter'd by the late Earl of Rochester, and Acted at the Theatre-Royal: Together with a Preface concerning the Author and his Writings, By one of his Friends*, London, 1685. On Wolseley's authorship see the Introduction, p. lxxxiv, n. 3.

Page 1. 23. Terence, *Andria*, prol. 21.

Page 2. 31 sq. Dryden had insisted on the inferiority of the Elizabethan poets in point of breeding, in the *Defence of the Epilogue*, 1672 (Ker, i. 175 sq.). The Précieuses had first made this a criterion of literary excellence, and Méré, for example, censures Virgil for writing as a poet rather than as a gentleman (*Œuvres*, ed. 1692, ii. 74); cf. V. Cousin, *La Société française au XVII^e siècle*, 1858, ii. 272 sq., and Balzac's discourse on the Conversation of the Romans, in *Œuvres*, ed. Moreau, i. 225–49. See also Pellisson's *Discours sur les Œuvres de M. Sarasin*, 1656 (§ xvii 'Du génie de M. Sarasin pour le monde', § xviii 'De sa conversation'): 'Je ne sçay par quel malheur le génie pour les Lettres et le génie du Monde compatissent rarement ensemble . . . Ne me demandez point ce qu'avoit M. Sarasin pour plaire si universellement; il n'avoit rien de ce qui déplaist en la pluspart des gens d'esprit & de ceux qui font profession des Lettres. Les uns, ou par une vertu trop austere ou par un mépris qui les rend eux-mesmes mesprisables, n'ont de commerce qu'avec les Sçavans, & renoncent volontairement à l'entretien de la plus grande partie du Monde . . . Il me suffit de dire qu'on ne remarquoit en nostre Amy pas un de ces défauts; & que, soit par là, soit par mille autres belles qualitez, il plaisoit à toutes les differentes sortes d'esprits, comme s'il n'eust jamais pensé qu'à plaire à chacune, aux Dames, aux gens de Lettres, aux gens de la Cour', &c.

Page 7. 26. Lucretius, i. 26–7. Lucretius was one of the favourite poets of French *libertins* and English Wits, 'not so much for his Learning as his Irreligion,' according to Blackmore (*infra*, 230. 18). Molière's fondness for the poet, acquired from Gassendi, is well known (*Œuvres*, ed. Despois-Mesnard, v. 557–61, x. 53–4), and Dryden formed a rather high estimate of his genius (Ker, i. 258 sq.). Evelyn's version of the first book, in 1656, and Creech's translation of the whole poem, in 1682, were both celebrated by Waller (*Poems*, ed. Drury, pp. 149, 218); before them the Abbé de Marolles had rendered the poem into French prose in 1650, and into French verse in 1677.

Page 8. 14. Horace, *A. P.* 352–3.

20. *Too nice a Correctness will be apt to deaden the Life.* Walsh's well-known advice to Pope to aim at 'correctness' (Spence, *Anecdotes*, p. 112) must be considered in connection with this earlier school of recalcitrants. Cf. Sedley's preface to *Bellamira*, 1687, cited in the Introduction, p. xcviii, n. Sedley was thinking of Horace (*A. P.* 351 sq.), but the influence of Longinus (ch. xxxiii–xxxvi) was more powerful in giving a setback to the ideal of 'correctness'. The treatise on the Sublime had been edited by Gerard Langbaine the elder in 1636, with a Latin translation and Latin notes, and had been translated into English by Hall in 1662; but the French version of Boileau in 1674 gave it an immediate accession of prestige, and the four English versions which followed, from Pulteney's in 1680 to Welsted's in 1712, were (in Swift's sneering phrase) 'translated from Boileau's translation'. Le Clerc, in 1699, said that the treatise 'is in everybody's hands, especially since it has been translated into French by M. Boileau' (*Parrhasiana*, Engl. transl., 1700, p. 85). In 1677, Dryden called Longinus 'after Aristotle the greatest critic among the Greeks' (Ker, i. 179); for further details of his influence, see J. Churton Collins, *Studies in Poetry and Criticism*, 1905, pp. 205–21.

27. *A Person of great Quality*, i. e. Charles Sackville, Earl of Dorset; his poems appeared, with Sedley's, in *A New Miscellany* in 1701.

Page 10. 22. The allusion is to Mulgrave's *Essay upon Poetry*; his name did not appear on the title-page of the first edition (see ii. 354). The remainder of Wolseley's preface is devoted

to a refutation of Mulgrave's remarks on the obscenity of Rochester's songs (see ii. 288).

PAGE 13. 6–11. The 'little Apers' of *Hudibras* include *Hogan Moganides, or the Dutch Hudibras*, 1674; *Butler's Ghost, or Hudibras, the Fourth Part*, 1682; *The Irish Hudibras*, 1689; Colvil's *Whig's Supplication, or the Scotch Hudibras*, 1695; and many others (see the *Retrospective Review*, 1821, iii. 317–35).

PAGE 15. 22. *Bawdry bare-fac'd, that poor Pretence to Wit*, &c. See ii. 288. 23. This statement of Mulgrave was approved by Dryden in the very year in which Wolseley wrote (Ker, i. 263: ''Tis most certain that barefaced bawdry is the poorest pretence to wit imaginable,' &c.); was Dryden answering Wolseley?

PAGE 16. 26. Horace, *A. P.* 143 'Non fumum ex fulgore, sed ex fumo dare lucem Cogitat.'

31–2. Wolseley here combines two Ovidian lines (*Fasti* vi. 5; *Ars Amat.* iii. 550), as Jonson and others had done before him (see i. 52. 28–9).

PAGE 17. 1–2. *Poetry is Pictura loquens*, &c. See i. 29. 6–8, and note. The attack on this 'old adage' was begun by Du Bos, in the *Réflexions critiques sur la Poésie et sur la Peinture*, 1719, pt. i. sect. 13, and was continued by Harris, Diderot, Moses Mendelssohn, and others, before Lessing's more famous discussion in the *Laokoon*; see Croce, *Estetica*, p. 481 sq., and Blümner's edition of the *Laokoon*, 1880, introduction, pp. 1–67.

34–5. *A. P.* 9–10.

PAGE 18. 24 sq. *The late Auction at Whitehall.* This probably refers to the dispersion of the King's pictures and other collections between 1649 and 1653; see Horace Walpole, *Anecdotes of Painting*, ch. x (*Works*, 1798, iii. 198–209). It is hardly possible to identify the picture which Wolseley has in mind; that described by Walpole as 'A satyr flayed, by Correggio, 1000*l*' (*ibid.* iii. 202), actually an allegory of Man under the dominion of vices, is now in the Louvre, and does not answer to the description in the text (cf. Waagen, *Treasures of Art in Great Britain*, 1854, ii. 465–84).

PAGE 21. 28–30. *Poetical Wit . . . a true and lively expression of Nature.* Cf. Dryden's definition of a play: 'a true and lively image of human nature' (Ker, i. 36). Note Wolseley's limitation of 'wit' to 'poetical wit'; on the meaning of the term

in its various seventeenth-century senses, see the Introduction, p. xxix sq.; an interesting contemporary discussion will be found in David Abercromby's *Discourse of Wit*, 1685.

Page 22. 28. Horace, *A. P.* 5.

Page 23. 20-2. See the Introduction, p. xxxi; and ii. 288. 17, and note. The source of the idea may possibly have been Demetrius Phalereus, as quoted by Rapin (*Réflexions*, i. 30): 'Demetrius Phalereus observes, There must be a proportion betwixt the words and the things.'

Page 25. 4. Petronius, *Satyr.* 118 (cf. Ker, i. 152, and note).

Page 26. 26 sq. *What does that* ed *in* undeserved *do there?* Cf. the discussion of this point by Dennis, *infra*, 173. 29—174. 18. The later seventeenth century insisted more and more that the language of poetry should conform to that of cultivated conversation and prose.

Page 27. 20-3. *A. P.* 71-2.

Page 29. 13. *Twenty ninth of May.* Charles II was born May 29, 1630.

24. *Aloisia Sigea*, i. e. a volume of licentious dialogues entitled *Aloisiæ Sigeæ Satira Sotadica de Arcanis Amoris et Veneris: Aloisia hispanice scripsit, latinitate donavit Joannes Meursius* (later called *Joannis Meursii Elegantiæ Latini Sermonis*), which appeared at Grenoble before 1678, and went through fifteen editions. Neither the Portuguese blue-stocking, Aloysia Sigea (*d.* 1560), nor the Dutch philologian Meursius (*d.* 1639) was concerned in the work; the real author seems to have been the French historian and littérateur, Nicolas Chorier (1609-1692): see an early discussion of the subject in the *Relation de ce qui s'est passé dans une Assemblée tenue au bas du Parnasse, pour la Réforme des Belles Lettres*, The Hague, 1739, pp. 94-6. The *Cabinet of Love*, in the *Works of the Earls of Rochester, Roscommon, and Dorset . . . containing the Cabinet of Love*, London, 1714, contains a metrical imitation of one of the dialogues of the *Aloisia Sigea*.

26. The *Escole des Filles, ou la Philosophie des Dames*, in two dialogues, was published at Paris in 1655, and was reprinted several times; it is ascribed to a certain Hélot. This is the 'idle roguish French book' which Pepys bought with so many misgivings on February 8, 1668; and a score of years later, the

daughters of the Dauphiness were caught reading it *sub rosa* (Mme de Sévigné, *Lettres*, ed. Monmerqué, viii. 134).

Page 30. 5. *How long Cadance and Foibles have been English words?* Dryden had ridiculed the use of 'foibles' in 1673, and of 'cadence' in 1674 (*Works*, ed. Scott-Saintsbury, iv. 304, x. 320).

7. Bayes, in the *Rehearsal*, act ii. sc. 2: 'I makes 'em both [i.e. the Kings of Brentford] speak French, to shew their breeding.'

22. This is Bayes's 'new way of writing', in the *Rehearsal*, act ii. sc. 4: he will 'begin the Play, and end it, without ever opening the Plot at all'; if the spectators 'cannot find it out themselves, e'en let 'em alone for Bayes, I warrant you'.

SIR WILLIAM TEMPLE (1628–1699)

The essays 'Upon the Ancient and Modern Learning' and 'Of Poetry' were published in the second part of Temple's *Miscellanea*. This volume appeared in November, 1690 (Arber, *Term Catalogues*, ii. 337). The British Museum possesses no edition earlier than the third; this contains the author's final revision, and has been used as the basis of the present text (*Miscellanea, the Second Part, in Four Essays*: I. *Upon Ancient and Modern Learning.* II. *Upon the Gardens of Epicurus.* III. *Upon Heroick Virtue.* IV. *Upon Poetry. By Sir William Temple, Baronet. Juvat antiquos accedere Fontes. The Third Edition, Corrected and Augmented by the Author*, London, 1692). Mr. W. W. Greg has kindly called my attention to the fact that the Library of Trinity College, Cambridge, possesses a copy of the edition of 1690.

French versions of the essays were published in *Les Œuvres mêlées de Monsieur le Chevalier Temple, Seconde Partie*, Utrecht, 1693, and in *Œuvres diverses du Chevalier Temple, Seconde Partie*, Amsterdam, 1708; Temple told Béat de Muralt (*Letters*, Engl. trans., 2nd ed., London, 1726, p. 87) that the translator 'had barbarously murdered' his work. Temple's posthumous 'Defence of the Essay upon Antient and Modern Learning' was published by Swift in *Miscellanea, The Third Part*, 1701.

The ancient and modern controversy (see the Introduction, p. lxxxviii sq.) was precipitated, or rather given a new turn, by

Charles Perrault, who read a poem on the superiority of the moderns, *Le Siècle de Louis le Grand*, at a meeting of the French Academy on January 27, 1687; and in the following year Fontenelle published his *Digression sur les Anciens et les Modernes*, and Perrault the first volume of his elaborate defence, the *Parallèle des Anciens et des Modernes*. In the controversy that ensued, Boileau, Dacier, and others espoused the cause of the ancients against Perrault and Fontenelle. Temple's essay focussed English attention on the controversy, and resulted not only in a general discussion, which the influence of Saint-Évremond kept within the bounds of moderation, but more especially in a bitter quarrel on the authenticity of the Letters of Phalaris, which Temple had mentioned as an illustration of the literary superiority of the ancients (cf. note to 64. 30 sq.). Rigault's *Histoire de la Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes*, 1856, is still the best account of the whole matter, for England as well as for France: cf. Brunetière, *Évolution des Genres*, ch. iv; Bonnefon, 'Charles Perrault littérateur et académicien,' in the *Revue d'Histoire littéraire de la France*, 1905, xii. 549–610; Vial and Denise, *Idées et Doctrines littéraires du XVII^e siècle*, pp. 247–90; Lombard, *La Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes: l'Abbé Du Bos*, 1908; Jebb, *Life of Bentley*; Macaulay, *Essay on Temple*; and *D.N.B.* s.v. Temple and Bentley.

Page 32. 20. *The Antediluvian World*, i. e. Thomas Burnet's *Sacred Theory of the Earth*, the first part of which, describing Paradise and the Deluge, appeared in an English dress in 1684, three years after the Latin original; the second part was published in 1689.

21. *The Plurality of Worlds*, i. e. Fontenelle's *Entretiens sur la Pluralité des Mondes*, 1686, translated into English by John Glanvill in 1688.

Page 33. 4. *A small Piece concerning Poesy.* In 1688, Fontenelle published a volume of *Poésies Pastorales*, which contained, in addition to the very tame pastorals themselves, a *Discours sur la Nature de l'Églogue* and the highly significant *Digression sur les Anciens et les Modernes.*

Page 34. 20. The fragments of the Egyptian priest Manetho (B. C. 283–246) on the history of Egypt are collected by Müller, *Frag. Hist. Graec.*, 1856.

21. Justin, *Hist. Philippi*, ii. 1. 5.

22. Herodotus, bks. iii, iv, *passim*; Diodorus Siculus, *Bibl. Hist.* xix. 73.

Page 39. 16. Temple's account of the Brahmans of India is almost wholly derived from Strabo, *Geog.* xv. 1. 59–73: on Calanus (40. 29), see *ibid.* xv. 1. 64; on Zormanochages, i. e. Zarmanochegas (41. 12), *ibid.* xv. 1. 73.

Page 41. 26. Herodotus, iv. 2.

Page 42. 30. *Missionary Jesuits.* Temple seems to have in mind two Portuguese Jesuits, from whose works his account of China (to 43. 32) is for the most part derived: Alvaro Semmedo, author of the *Imperio de la China* (Engl. transl., *The History of the Great and Renowned Monarchy of China*, 1655; cf. pp. 31–58, 86–96), and Gabriel de Magalhaens, author of the *Doze Excellencias da China* (Engl. transl., *New History of China*, 1688); cf. also the work of the Belgian Jesuit, Philippe Couplet, *Confucius, Sinarum Philosophus, sive Scientia Sinica Latine exposita*, 1687.

Page 45. 4. *Amautas*, the sages of the Peruvian Incas; cf. Garcilaso de la Vega's *Commentarios Reales de los Yncas*, 1609 (abridged version by Sir Paul Rycaut, *The Royal Commentaries of Peru*, 1688), bk. ii, ch. 27, on 'the poetry of the Yncas *Amautas*, who are philosophers, and Haravicus or poets'.

Page 49. 25–6. The 'Stag's head at Amboyse' is described by Evelyn, *Diary*, May 2, 1644. The 'large Table at Memorancy' has been identified by M. Pierre de Nolhac as the sixteenth-century table, with decorations by Jean Bullant, once owned by the constable Anne de Montmorency at the Château d'Écouen, but now at Chantilly.

Page 50. 25 sq. *Science and Arts have run their circles, and had their periods.* On the idea of progress, see the Introduction, pp. lxxxix sq., ci sq. The theory of cycles of culture was first widely diffused between the time of Bouhours's *Entretiens d'Ariste et d'Eugène*, 1671, and Fontenelle's *Dialogues des Morts*, 1683; cf. Ker, i. 36, ii. 25, and *infra*, 60. 17 sq.

Page 54. 22. John Reuchlin (1455–1522), the famous German humanist.

23. George Buchanan (1506–1582), the Scottish historian and scholar.

PAGE 55. 22. *The New French Author*, &c. See *supra*, note to 33. 4.

PAGE 62. 33. *Wilkins.* See *infra*, note to 226. 9.

34. *D'Avila.* See *infra*, note to 136. 11–16.

34. Famianus Strada (1572–1649), author of the *Prolusiones*; his *De Bello Belgico*, 1632–47, was translated into English by Sir R. Stapylton in 1650.

35. The German historian Sleidanus (John Philippson, 1506–1556) published his *De Statu Religionis et Reipublicae Carolo Quinto Caesare Commentarii* at Strassburg in 1555; it was translated in 1560 as *Sleidanes Commentaries.*

PAGE 64. 30—65. 22. This is the passage which precipitated the Bentley-Boyle controversy. The letters ascribed without foundation to the Sicilian tyrant Phalaris had been widely diffused during the Renaissance; they had been translated into Latin and into Italian before the end of the fifteenth century, twice into French before the end of the sixteenth, and into English by W. D. in 1634; they were again translated by J. S. in 1699. Bentley's *Dissertation* settled the question of their spuriousness; for a list of the controversial pamphlets in the dispute, see Dyce's edition of the *Dissertation*, 1836, vol. pp. xi–xviii. One of these pamphlets, *An Essay concerning Critical and Curious Learning*, 1698, by T. R., Dyce on very slight evidence ascribes to Rymer.

PAGE 65. 8. *Politian.* See note to i. 75. 20. The passage to which Temple refers occurs in Poliziano's first Epistle (*Angeli Politiani Opera*, Lyons, 1539, p. 2).

33. The allusion to the Roman History of Velleius Paterculus (written under Tiberius) as a model of Latin style is an instance of Temple's casual and uncritical judgements, not unlike that on the Phalaris Letters.

PAGE 66. 5. The 'little Treatise' of Minucius Felix is the *Octavius*, a charming dialogue in the Ciceronian manner, written in defence of Christianity in the age of Marcus Aurelius; it was translated into English by R. James in 1636.

13–31. This list of great writers has been ridiculed by Macaulay because of the omission of Dante, Tasso, Shakespeare, Milton, Molière, and other poets; but Temple had specifically limited the discussion to prose (*supra*, 63. 12–13: 'But the

Consideration of Poetry ought to be a subject by it self. For the Books we have in Prose,' &c.).

15. *Padre Paolo*, i. e. Fra Paolo Sarpi (1552–1623), historian of the Council of Trent; the *Istoria del Concilio Tridentino* was published at London in 1619, and was translated into English by Sir Nathaniel Brent in 1676.

16. Antonio de Guevara (1495?–1545), author of the *Relox de Principes, o Marco Aurelio*, 1529, and other works; they were translated by North, Hellowes, and Fenton, and the *Letters* by Savage as late as 1657. Their inflated style was once thought to have exercised an influence on Lyly's Euphuism.

22. The *Histoire amoureuse des Gaules* of Roger de Rabutin, comte de Bussy (1618–1693), was published *c.* 1665; 'a pretty libel against the amours of the Court of France' (Pepys, *Diary*, May 1, 1666).

Page 68. 3–7. Cowley had already developed the Ovidian theory that peace is essential to poetry; see ii. 80–81, and notes.

Page 71. 22 sq. The theory that 'Cervantes smiled Spain's chivalry away' (Byron, *Don Juan*, xiii. 11) has persisted in English literature since Temple first gave expression to it in this passage; cf. Steele, in the *Tatler*, no. 219, Defoe's *Memoirs of Captain Carleton*, Motteux's preface to *Don Quixote*, 1700 (Becker, *Don Quixote in der englischen Literatur*, p. 26 sq.). I have been unable to identify the 'ingenious Spaniard at Brussels' who gave rise to the story, though Professors Farinelli of Turin and Bonilla y San Martín of Madrid have kindly suggested utterances by Quevedo and others not wholly dissimilar in character. Rapin (*Réflexions sur la Poëtique*, ii. 28) ascribes Cervantes's satire on chivalry to personal pique.

Page 72. 24. Temple apparently refers, not to Alfonso X, the Learned (*el Sabio*), King of Castile from 1252 to 1284, but to Alfonso V of Aragon, I of Naples and Sicily (1385–1458), the hero of Panormita's *De Dictis et Factis Regis Alphonsi*.

Page 75. 3. Virgil, *Ecl.* viii. 69–71.

Page 76. 5. Meric Casaubon's *Treatise concerning Enthusiasme, as it is an Effect of Nature, but is mistaken by many for either Divine Inspiration or Diabolical Possession* was published in 1655.

Page 83. 22—85. 17. The long campaign against critical rules was inaugurated in the first half of the sixteenth century by

Aretino (cf. Vossler, 'Pietro Aretino's künstlerisches Bekenntnis', in the *Neue Heidelberger Jahrbücher*, 1900), and was continued by Bruno, Marino, and others (see the Introduction, p. lxxv, and cf. Méré, *Œuvres*, ed. 1692, i. 231 sq., ii. 18, 75 sq., 118); but Saint-Évremond led the vanguard in Temple's day. His essays are filled with attacks on the Rules; cf. *Œuvres mêlées*, ed. Giraud, ii. 414: 'Vous avez raison, Messieurs, vous avez raison de vous moquer des songes d'Aristote et d'Horace, des rêveries de Heinsius et de Grotius, des caprices de Corneille et de Ben Johnson, des fantaisies de Rapin et de Boileau. La seule règle des honnêtes gens, c'est la mode. Que sert une raison qui n'est point reçue, et qui peut trouver à redire à une extravagance qui plaît?' (cf. *ibid.* ii. 321, 387, 501–2, &c.). The influence of Saint-Évremond's critical work at this time was very great. The first English versions, *Mixt Essays . . . written originally in French by the Sieur de Saint Evremont*, 1685, and *Miscellanea, or Various Discourses*, translated by F. Spence, 1686, were probably the first volumes of critical essays that had ever appeared in England; these were followed by the *Miscellaneous Essays*, 1692–94, in two volumes, translated by various hands, by the *Works*, 1700, in two volumes, and by a three-volume collection 'with the Author's Life by Mr. Des Maizeaux', 1714 (2nd ed. 1728). In addition to these, Silvestre and Des Maizeaux published at least two editions of the French originals in London, the *Œuvres meslées*, 1705, in two volumes, and the *Véritables Œuvres*, 1706, in three. Gildon, in the *Complete Art of Poetry*, 1718, i. 117 sq., answers Temple's attack on the Rules, as well as that in Farquhar's *Discourse upon Comedy*, 1702.

Page 84. 17. *It would be too much Mortification to these great Arbitrary Rulers . . . to Observe the worthy Productions that have been formed by their Rules.* Cf. Dryden's prologue to *Love Triumphant*, 1694 (*Works*, ed. Scott-Saintsbury, viii. 379):

> 'To Shakespeare's critic [i.e. Rymer] he [i.e. Dryden] bequeathes the curse,
> To find his faults, and yet himself make worse;
> A precious reader in poetic schools,
> Who by his own examples damns his rules.'

Cf. also Saint-Évremond's anecdote of the Abbé d'Aubignac (*Œuvres mêlées*, ii. 320), and Fontenelle (*Œuvres*, ed. 1764, iii. 80): 'Ces règles qui ne sont pas encore faites, ou que tout le monde ne sait pas, voilà apparemment l'art de plaire, voilà en quoi consiste la magie.'

31. *Fœliciter audet.* Horace, *Epist.* ii. 1. 166.

32. *Lusit amabiliter. Ibid.* ii. 1. 148.

PAGE 85. 3. *Ibid.* ii. 1. 211–13.

31. Aristotle, *Probl.* xix. 28.

32. Tacitus, *Germ.* ii.

PAGE 86. 1. Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* vii. 57. 14.

PAGE 87. 18. *The Spanish Translation of the Jews in Ferrara.* This version of the Old Testament, begun in the fifteenth century, was completed in the sixteenth by Abraham Usque (E. Pinhel) and Yom Tob Athias (Jerónimo de Vargas), and published at Ferrara in 1553 as the *Biblia en Lengua Española traduzida palabra por palabra de la verdad Hebrayca por muy excelentes Letrados.*

PAGE 90. 20. *Book of Fables*, &c. This refers to *Le Livre des Lumières, ou la Conduite des Roys, composé par le sage Pilpay, Indien, traduit en françois par David Sahid d'Ispahan*, Paris, 1644. It was virtually what it professed to be, a translation of a Persian form of the Arabic *Kalilah wa Dimnah*, which in its turn goes back to the original Indian fables of Bidpai, or Pilpay. La Fontaine borrowed some of his best fables from this source.

29. *Longi Pastoralia*, i. e. the famous Greek pastoral romance of *Daphnis and Chloe*, ascribed to Longus.

PAGE 92. 6. *Florus*, the 'Florus poeta' (probably P. Annius Florus) whose verses to Hadrian, in which this phrase occurs, are preserved by Aelius Spartianus, *Adrian.* xv.

9. These verses of Hadrian are also to be found in the same book of Aelius Spartianus.

PAGE 93. 20 sq. Wotton (*Reflections on Ancient and Modern Learning*, 3rd ed., 1705, p. 509) points out that Temple's 'Runic' knowledge is chiefly derived from two Danish scholars, Olaus Wormius and Thomas Bartholin the younger. Wormius published his *Literatura Runica* in 1636, *Danicorum Monumentorum libri sex* in 1643, and other works on Scandinavian antiquities; Bartholin's *Antiquitates Danicae* appeared at Copenhagen

in 1689. For an account of these and other works accessible to Temple, including Robert Sheringham's *De Anglorum Gentis Origine Disceptatio*, 1670, see F. E. Farley's *Scandinavian Influences in the English Romantic Movement*, Boston, U. S. A., 1903.

PAGE 97. 15. *Lougaroos*, i. e. 'loups-garous.'

18 sq. On these imaginary derivations of 'mare' or 'nightmare' from *Mara*, of 'bo' or 'bogle-bo' from *Bo*, and 'Old Nick' from *Nicka*, see Olaus Wormius, *Dan. Mon.* i. 4, Brand's *Popular Antiquities*, ed. Ellis, ii. 515, 519, and *N. E. D.* s. v. On 'rhyming rats to death', see the notes of the commentators on *As You Like It*, III. ii. 187–8.

PAGE 99. 9–15. Boileau's authority (*Art Poëtique*, iii. 193 sq.) had given a setback to the argument in favour of Christian machinery in heroic poetry; see notes to ii. 5. 20–33 and ii. 88. 2 sq.

20. *His Moral lay so bare that it lost the Effect.* Cf. Addison, *Account of the greatest English Poets*, 1694, on Spenser:

'While the dull moral lies too plain below.'

27 sq. *They contented themselves with the Scraps, with Songs and Sonnets*, &c. Temple inherited this contempt for the lyric from Bacon and Hobbes; cf. Rapin, *Réflexions sur la Poëtique*, i. 3 (Rymer's transl.): 'Thus an ignorant person shall start up, and be thought a Poet in the world for a lucky hit in a Song or Catch, where is only the empty flash of an imagination heated perhaps by a debauch, and nothing of that celestial fire which only is the portion of an extraordinary Genius ... A Sonnet, Ode, Elegy, Epigram, and those little kind of Verses that often make so much noise in the world, are ordinarily no more than the meer productions of imagination; a superficial wit, with a little conversation of the world, is capable of these things.'

PAGE 101. 19. Horace, *Sat.* i. 4. 81–5.

PAGE 102. 12. *La Secchia Rapita*, Alessandro Tassoni's mock heroic poem on the war declared by the Bolognese on the Modenese in order to recover a bucket, was published in 1622.

12. The *Virgile Travesti* of Paul Scarron (1610–1660) was published in 1648–52, and was paraphrased by Charles Cotton (*Scarronides*, 1664).

13. Sir John Mennes, or Mince (1599–1671), is referred to here as co-author of *Wits Recreations*, 1640, and *Musarum*

Deliciae, 1655, which owed their inspiration to the *Muses Gaillardes*, the *Parnasse Satyrique*, the *Cabinet Satyrique*, and similar collections of French verse written more or less in imitation of the *Priapeia*.

14. *Cotton.* See *supra*, note to l. 12.

30 sq. Temple's complaint that 'smoothness of language or style' had taken the place of 'spirit and strength' had been anticipated by La Bruyère, Rapin, and other French critics; cf. *Réflexions sur la Poëtique*, i. 31 (Rymer's transl.): 'Of late some have fallen into another extremity by a too scrupulous care of purity of language: they have begun to take from Poesie all its nerves and all its majesty by a too timorous reservedness and false modesty, which some thought to make the Character of the French Tongue, by robbing it of all those wise and judicious boldnesses that Poesie demands,' &c. It is these occasional elements of freedom in Rapin's theory that made his book popular in England. Cf. *supra*, 8. 20, and note; also Bouhours, *La Manière de bien penser*, ed. 1695, p. 415.

Page 103. 14 sq. Saint-Évremond's praise of English comedy in his essay 'De la Comédie angloise', 1677 (*Œuvres mêlées*, ed. 1865, ii. 383: 'Il n'y a point de comédie qui se conforme plus à celle des anciens que l'angloise, pour ce qui regarde les mœurs,' &c.), counted for much in determining English opinion; and Rymer (see *infra*, note to 196. 28), Dennis, and Congreve agreed with Temple in thinking that in this *genre* their countrymen had 'excelled both the Modern and the Ancient'. Temple here ascribes the superiority of English comedy to its humour, and his statement that humour is 'a Word peculiar to our Language' became a commonplace of English criticism (see the Introduction, p. lx sq.). He accounted for this fact on the ground of the greater freedom of English manners and government, and this argument was repeated by Congreve (1696) and many others from the 144th *Guardian* in 1713 to Blair's *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles-Lettres* in 1783.

25. Molière's influence in England was then at its height; for an early list of English plays imitated or borrowed from him, see Giles Jacob's *Poetical Register*, 1719, pp. 292–5.

Page 106. 25. *Rosycrucia Principles.* The Rosicrucian mysteries, first enunciated in Germany in the *Fama Fraternitatis*, 1614, were

expounded in England by Robert Fludd and John Heydon (see *D. N. B.* s. v.), but the *Comte de Gabalis, ou Entretiens sur les Sciences secrètes*, 1670, by the Abbé de Villars, had given them a wider popularity at about this time; the book was translated twice in 1680, by Lovell and by Ayres, and again in 1714.

Page 107. 10. *All Nations from China to Peru*, another of the many phrases and commonplaces due to Temple. Dr. Johnson, T. Warton, and others repeat the phrase, as Temple himself may have been thinking of Boileau's 'De Paris au Pérou, du Japon jusqu'à Rome.'

GERARD LANGBAINE (1656 1692)

An Account of the English Dramatick Poets, or Some Observations and Remarks on the Lives and Writings of all those that have Publish'd either Comedies, Tragedies, Tragi-Comedies, Pastorals, Masques, Interludes, Farces, or Opera's in the English Tongue appeared at Oxford in 1691; the whole of Langbaine's account of Dryden (pp. 130–77) has been reprinted here. On Langbaine's earlier tentatives, and on the work of his predecessors, the catalogues of plays by Kirkman (1661, 1671), and the collections of literary Lives by Phillips (1675) and Winstanley (1687), see *D. N. B.* s. v. Langbaine, who was widely read in continental literature, may have known Leone Allacci's *Drammaturgia*, Rome, 1666, an alphabetical index of plays not unlike his own, or Chappuzeau's *Théâtre françois*, Paris, 1674, which also contains lists of plays; on the earlier contributions of continental scholars to bibliography, biography, and literary history, see Belloni, *Seicento*, pp. 367–8, 432–3, Goujet, *Bibliothèque françoise*, viii. 291–393, Baillet, *Jugemens des Savans*, ed. 1725, ii. 5–61, and Morhof, *Polyhistor*, ed. 1747, i. 186–230.

Page 111. 13. The *Feint Astrologue* of Thomas Corneille, younger brother of the great Corneille, appeared in 1648, and was translated into English as *The Feign'd Astrologer* in 1668. The plot is taken from Calderon's *El Astrólogo fingido*.

Page 112. 15. Vincent Voiture (1598–1648), the favourite poet of the Hôtel de Rambouillet; his letters were translated into English several times.

24–5. *Cyrus*, the hero of Mlle de Scudéry's romance, *Artamène, ou le Grand Cyrus*, 1649–53 (Engl. transl. 1653); *Oroondates*, the hero of La Calprenède's *Cassandre*, 1642–5 (Engl. transl. 1652): for the plots of these and other heroic romances mentioned by Langbaine, see Kœrting, *Geschichte des französischen Romans im XVII. Jahrhundert*, Leipzig, 1885–87. Cf. Dryden (Ker, i. 157): 'For my own part, I declare myself for Homer and Tasso, and am more in love with Achilles and Rinaldo than with Cyrus and Oroondates.'

n. 1. *Almahide*, i.e. Mlle de Scudéry's *Almahide, ou l'Esclave Reyne*, 1660.

Page 114. 12. *Cinthio.* See note to ii. 220. 4.

Page 117. 28–9. *On Account of old Acquaintance in the Year* 1659. An allusion to Dryden's *Heroic Stanzas to the Memory of Oliver Cromwell*, published in that year.

n. 1. Dr. Walter Charleton (1619–1707): His *Two Discourses*, 1. *Concerning the different Wits of Men*, 2. *Of the Mysterie of Vintners*, appeared in 1669, 2nd ed. 1675.

Page 118. 4–5. *Phemius*, in *Od.* i. 54, &c.; *Tychius*, in *Il.* vii. 219–23.

Page 119. 14. *The Captive Queen*, the sub-title of Mlle de Scudéry's *Almahide*; see *supra*, note to 112, n. 1.

15–20. Davenant's *Law against Lovers* is a combination of *Measure for Measure* and *Much Ado about Nothing*.

19. *Sir Positive At-all.* See note to ii. 150. 20.

24 sq. *Tasso's Arguments to Apollo*, the invention of Boccalini's fancy (see the Introduction, pp. xxiii–xxv), were often cited by seventeenth-century opponents of the Rules; Tasso himself scarcely uttered so strong a protest.

Page 120. 16. *Flecknoe.* See ii. 94. 12–17.

Page 122. 18–20. Aristotle, *Poet.* xxxiii. 3, 4; Suidas, *Lexicon*, s. v. Κόρινος; Aelian, *Varia Historia*, xi. 2.

23. *Macrobius.* See note to ii. 174. 11.

23. *Fulvio Ursini.* See note to ii. 318. 5. His *Virgilius Collatione Scriptorum Graecorum illustratus* appeared in 1568.

26–9. This story of Virgil is told by Donatus, *Vita Virg.* xvi.

Page 126. 20–1. *The Rota*, i.e. *The Censure of the Rota on Mr. Dryden's Conquest of Granada*, Oxford, 1673, was probably written by Richard Leigh. Martin Clifford's *Notes upon Mr.*

Dryden's Poems in Four Letters was probably written about the same time, but was not published until 1687. On the whole controversy, see Dryden, *Works*, ed. Scott-Saintsbury, i. 130–8.

Page 127. 1–2. *In fine, if Old Moody will allow me*, &c. This refers to Old Moody's objection to 'in fine' and other fashionable Gallicisms of the day, in Dryden's *Sir Martin Mar-all*, act iii, sc. 1.

22. Louis Grabut, or Grabu, master of the King's band, composed the music for Dryden's opera; Pepys thought little of his skill (*Diary*, Oct. 1, 1667). Cf. the *Oxford History of Music*, 1902, iii. 196.

Page 128. 30–34. Samuel Purchas (1575?–1626); Sir William Sanderson (1586?–1676).

Page 129. 2. Nathaniel Wanley's *Wonders of the Little World, or a General History of Man* appeared in 1678.

15 sq. On Ravenscroft's *Mamamouchi*, see note to ii. 210. 7; cf. Dryden, *Works*, ed. Scott-Saintsbury, i. 136–8.

Page 130. 2. *The Annals of Love, containing Select Histories of the Amours of divers Princes*, London, 1672.

7. The *Roman Comique* of Paul Scarron (1610–1660) appeared in 1651, and was translated into English in 1676, again in 1700 by Savage, Tom Brown, and others, and in 1775 by Oliver Goldsmith.

10–12. The *Comédie sans Comédie* of Philippe Quinault (1635–1688) appeared in 1654; his tragedies exercised considerable influence on the English heroic play.

13–14. La Fontaine published his *Contes* between 1666 and 1685; Langbaine refers to the 'Conte d'un Paysan qui avoit offensé son Seigneur' (*Œuvres*, ed. Regnier, iv. 131).

16. *Les Cents Nouvelles Nouvelles*, a famous collection of stories narrated between 1456 and 1461, and first printed in 1486.

20. The *Six Voyages* of Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, describing his travels in Turkey, India, and Persia, were published 1676–7, and translated 1678–84.

Page 132. 34 sq. *Guzman's Juego de Toros & Cannas.* This refers to the account of the bull-fight and the *juego de cañas* (Dryden's 'flying skirmish of the darted cane') in the picaresque novel *Guzman de Alfarache*, pt. i, bk. i, ch. 8 (*Bibl. de Autores Españoles*, iii. 211 sq.): see note to i. 146. 18.

Page 134. 22–5. Juan de Mariana published his famous *Historia*

de España in Latin (1592 sq.) before translating it into Spanish (1601 sq.); Louis Turquet de Mayerne published his *Histoire générale d'Espagne* in 1586 (Engl. transl. 1612); for Thuanus, see note to i. 113. 8; Francesco Guicciardini's *Storia d'Italia* appeared posthumously in 1561; the Sicilian Lucio Marineo wrote *De Rebus Hispaniae Memorabilibus*, 1530, and other works on Spain; Carolus Verardus published a drama in Latin prose on the conquest of Granada, *Historia Baetica, seu de Expugnatione Granatae*, at Rome in 1493; Domingo de Valtanas Mexía (1488–1560) is the author of a *Compendium Rerum Moralium & in Hispania Gestarum.*

n. 1. John Owen, (1560?–1622); see his *Epigrammata*, Elzevir ed., Amsterdam, 1647, p. 119.

Page 135. 17. *M. Hédelin*, i. e. the Abbé d'Aubignac, author of the *Pratique du Théâtre*, 1657 (Engl. transl. 1684); cf. Arnaud, *Étude sur la Vie et les Œuvres de l'Abbé d'Aubignac*, 1887.

33 sq. *Don Sebastian King of Portugal, an historical Novel in four parts: Done out of French by F. Spence*, 1683.

34–5. The Portuguese Jesuit, Antonio Vasconcellos, died in 1622.

Page 136. 11–16. Enrico Caterino Davila's *Historia delle Guerre civili di Francia* was published in 1630, and translated into English by Sir Charles Cotterel in 1672 as *The History of the Civil Wars in France*; François Eudes de Mézeray published his *Histoire de France* between 1643 and 1651; Pierre Matthieu's *Histoire de France* appeared in 1631; the *Mémoires* of the diplomatist Michel de Castelnau (d. 1592) are devoted to the period from 1559 to 1570; François de Rosset, the French translator of *Don Quixote* and of the *Orlando Furioso*, published his *Histoires Tragiques de notre Temps* in 1614.

26. *Corneille's or rather Calderon's Play.* See *supra*, note to 111. 13.

28. *M. Scudery in his Romance call'd Ibrahim*, i. e. *Ibrahim ou l'illustre Bassa*, by Mlle de Scudéry (not by her brother, the author of *Alaric*): it was translated into English by Henry Cogan in 1652.

Page 137. 27. *The Fortunate, Deceiv'd, and Unfortunate Lovers*, i. e. *Les Amans heureux, trompez, malheureux*, a collection of novels in three volumes, published in 1683.

30-1. *Le Triomphe de l'Amour sur le Destin*, by Gabriel de Brémond, appeared in 1677, and was translated in 1678.

31–2. René Le Pays (1636-1690): his romance of *Zélotide* appeared in 1665.

Page 138. 13. *Preface of The Great Favourite.* See ii. 105–111, and notes.

17–19. Francisco Lopez de Gomara, or Gomera, published his *Historia general de las Indias, con la Conquista del Mexico y de la Nueva España* in 1553; Theodore de Bry, the Dutch engraver and printer, published the first part of his *Historia Americae* in 1590; John Ogilby (see note to ii. 76. 11) published his *America, being the latest and most accurate Description of the New World*, in 1671.

34. *The Annals of Love.* See *supra*, note to 130. 2.

Page 139. 1. The *Contes* of Antoine Le Métel, sieur d'Ouville, appeared in 1644, and were often reprinted.

12. *L'Amant Oisif*, a collection of fifty novels from the Spanish, is ascribed to a certain Garouville.

34 sq. *Controverted by Sr. Robert Howard.* See ii. 97 sq., and notes.

Page 140. 13. Sir Fopling Flutter, in Etherege's *Man of Mode*, act iv, sc. 1: 'That for all this smattering of the mathematics, you may be out in your judgement of tennis.'

27–8. *He ironically accuses Sr. Robert's* [*printer*] *for setting* shut *for* open. For Howard's slip, see ii. 108. 5–7; and for Dryden's ironical comment, see Ker, i. 117.

Page 141. 1. *Prose mesurée.* Cf. Dryden's dedication of the *Rival Ladies* (Ker, i. 6): 'That kind of writing which we call blank verse, but the French, more properly, *prose mesurée*.'

11. The *Rival Brothers* is one of the tales included in Scarron's *Roman Comique*, bk. ii, ch. 19; see *supra*, note to 130. 7.

17. *Bayes's Art of Transversing*, in the *Rehearsal*, act i: 'I take a Book in my hand, either at home, or elsewhere, for that's all one; if there be any Wit in't, as there is no Book but has some, I Transverse it; that is, if it be Prose, put it into Verse (but that takes up some time), if it be Verse, put it into Prose.'

Page 142. 4–5. *Francion, written by M. Du Parc.* Charles Sorel published his *Histoire comique de Francion* under the name

of N. de Moulinet, sieur du Parc; the first edition appeared in 1622, and an English version in 1655.

7. Shackerley Marmion (1603–1639): his comedy, *A Fine Companion*, appeared in 1633.

21. Martial, viii. 48. 8 ('Qua possis melius,' &c.).

22–24. *Since a certain Worthy Bishop refus'd Orders to a certain Poet.* Settle, Tom Brown, Milbourne, and other enemies of Dryden charged him with resentment against the clergy because he had been refused orders (cf. *Works*, ed. Scott-Saintsbury, i. 358, and note), but there seem to be no grounds for these assertions.

29. *The Reformation*, 1673, a comedy ascribed to Arrowsmith, is, like the *Rehearsal*, a burlesque on rhymed tragedy.

PAGE 143. 14–15. *The Pilgrim*, i.e. Gabriel de Brémond's novel, *Le Pèlerin* (1675?), translated by P. Belon in 1680.

28. Nathaniel Lee (1653?–1692).

PAGE 144. 30. *Lollius.* See Ker, i. 203, and note.

PAGE 145. 10. Horace, *A. P.* 28.

14–15. *This Expression in Virgil*, &c. Dryden says Ovid; he doubtless had in mind *Met.* xi. 63, 'cupidis amplectitur ulnis,' and deliberately misquoted ('vacuis' for 'cupidis') in order to justify his own words, 'with *empty* arms embrace you whilst you sleep.'

21–3. *Zosimus* (*fl.* 5th cent.), author of Ἱστορία νέα; Herodian (*fl.* 3rd cent.), author of a history of the Roman Emperors from 180 to 238; Socrates (379–440?), author of Ἐκκλησιαστὴ Ἱστορία; Julius Capitolinus (*fl.* beg. 4th cent.), author of the lives of several emperors in the *Historia Augusta.*

PAGE 146. 3. From Dryden's prologue to Dr. Charles Davenant's *Circe*, 1677, in *Works*, x. 331.

PAGE 147. 10. These verses appeared in Richard Flecknoe's *Epigrams of all Sorts, made at divers Times and on Several Occasions*, 1670, p. 70, and were reprinted in his *Collection of the Choicest Epigrams and Characters*, 1673, p. 47. I owe these references to the kindness of Mr. Beverly Chew, whose Library contains both of these rare volumes.

JOHN DENNIS (1657–1734)

The *Impartial Critick*, published by R. Taylor in 1693, was dedicated on the title-page to the Earl of Dorset, and bore the Virgilian motto: 'Hanc etiam, Mæcenas, aspice partem.' It was one of several works called forth by the publication of Rymer's *Short View of Tragedy* (see ii. 341–2), which had also been dedicated to Dorset. Dr. Johnson told Boswell that 'he wished to see John Dennis's *Critical Works* collected' (*Life*, ed. Birkbeck Hill, iii. 40); only one or two of Dennis's critical essays have been reprinted since that date; and the larger task remains undone, but still worth doing.

Page 150. 13 sq. On Dennis's theory of the influence of climate and custom, see the Introduction, pp. ci–cii.

Page 151. 27 sq. Saint-Évremond, *Œuvres mêlées*, ed. Giraud, ii. 371–2. The essay, *Sur nos Comédies*, in which this anecdote occurs, and another, *Sur la Comédie angloise*, have furnished the point of departure for Dennis in this prefatory letter.

Page 152. 16 sq. Rymer's views on Waller in the *Short View of Tragedy*, pp. 78–80, are thus summed up in the table of contents: '*Chaucer* refin'd our English. Which in perfection by *Waller*. His Poem on the Navy Royal beyond all Modern Poetry in any Language. Before him our Poets better expressed their thoughts in Latin.'

20 sq. On the theory of 'beauties' and 'faults', see the Introduction, p. xcix. Dennis advances the argument by connecting the criticism of beauties with genius and that of faults with mere common sense; cf. Coleridge, *Biogr. Lit.*, ch. iii: 'He who tells me that there are *defects* in a new work tells me nothing which I should not have taken for granted without his information. But he who points out and elucidates the *beauties* of an original work does indeed give me interesting information, such as experience would not have authorized me in anticipating.' Rymer was the chief representative of the 'criticism of faults' in the seventeenth century. On the later discussion of the 'criticism of beauties', which Sainte-Beuve

(*Causeries du Lundi*, iii. 300) thought to have originated with Diderot, see M. Souriau, *La Préface de Cromwell*, pp. 40–1, 319–23.

28–9. Saint-Évremond, in a letter to La Fontaine, and La Fontaine in his reply to that letter, lament Waller's death (Saint-Évremond, ed. Giraud, iii. 373, 380–1).

Page 155. 29 sq. John Dyer, whose *News Letter* was continued until his death in 1713; he is the 'Authentick Intelligence, our Aristotle in Politicks' of the forty-third *Spectator*.

Page 156. 16. *Juvenal*, i. e. Dryden's translation, which was published in 1693.

Page 157. 25. The 'ingenious Frenchman' is Fontenelle; in his *Dialogues des Morts*, 1683 (*Œuvres*, ed. 1764, i. 89), Scarron is represented as saying to Seneca: 'J'ai mis en vers burlesques la divine Enéide de votre Virgile; & l'on ne sauroit mieux faire voir que le magnifique & le ridicule sont si voisins qu'ils se touchent.' The closeness of the sublime and the ridiculous had been suggested by Longinus (*Sublime*, ch. iii), and the idea was later given renewed currency by Marmontel, Tom Paine, and Napoleon.

Page 161. 20. *Quantum mutatus.* Rymer's sneer, in the epistle dedicatory of the *Short View of Tragedy*, evoked a reply from Dryden in the same year (see Ker, ii. 6, and note).

Page 162. 31. André Dacier (1651–1722) became highly influential about this time (see note to ii. 295. 32). His translation of Horace into French prose, published between 1681 and 1689, contained an essay on the satires which appeared several times in English dress; and his commentary on the *Poetics* (*La Poëtique d'Aristote traduite en françois avec des Remarques*, 1692) was translated in 1705. Rymer coupled him with Le Bossu as a reformer of modern poetry, and Dryden held him in high respect.

Page 169. 1 sq. Note that Dennis, in this critique of Waller's verses *To the King, on his Navy*, has borrowed Rymer's critical method, even though professing to refute Rymer's judgement of the poem itself; see the Introduction, § vii. Macaulay's essay on Robert Montgomery is a modern example of the 'criticism of faults' according to the single standard of common sense.

18–20. From Rochester's *Allusion to Horace* (*supra*, ii. 283. 34 sq.).

PAGE 173. 20. Juvenal, *Sat.* x. 180.

PAGE 173. 29–174. 18. Cf. *supra*, 26. 26–9, and note.

PAGE 177. 18. John Oldham (1653–1683); various contemporary opinions of his verse are collected in Dryden's *Works*, ed. Scott-Saintsbury, xi. 99, n.

PAGE 178. 6. Horace, *Epist.* ii. 1. 45–8.

PAGE 179. 6. These sonorous lines are from Roscommon's *Essay on Translated Verse* (*supra*, ii. 298. 2–4), but Dennis seems to imply (l. 9) that they are really Dryden's.

22. Is the 'worthy Author' of *The Preface* real or imaginary?

PAGE 180. 25. Saint-Évremond, in his *Observations sur le Goût et le Discernement des François* (*Œuvres mêlées*, ed. Giraud, ii. 465–6).

PAGE 182. 32–3. See ii. 209. 14, and note.

PAGE 183. 16. Horace, *A. P.* 189–90.

PAGE 188. 2. *Ibid.* 319.

PAGE 194. 30–1. *The Rules of Aristotle are nothing but Nature and Good Sence reduc'd to a Method.* This is literally borrowed from Rapin, from whom Dryden and Pope also took it; see the Introduction, p. lxviii.

PAGE 196. 28. *Mr. Rymer's Judgment of our English Comedies.* The *Short View of Tragedy* closes with this sentence (p. 168): 'And yet for modern Comedy, doubtless our English are the best in the World.' See *supra*, 103. 14 sq., and note.

34. Caesar's lines on Terence, regretting that the poet did not possess strength equal to his great charm, are preserved by Suetonius, *Terent.* v.

PAGE 197. 1. *The Plain Dealer*, Wycherley's last play, was acted in 1674.

CHARLES GILDON (1665–1724)

The letter, 'To Mr. T. S. [Thomas Southerne, the dramatist?] in Vindication of Mr. Milton's *Paradise lost*,' has been transcribed from *Miscellaneous Letters and Essays on several Subjects: Philosophical, Moral, Historical, Critical, Amorous, &c., In Prose and Verse. Directed to John Dryden, Esq., The Honourable Geo. Granvill, Esq., Walter Moile, Esq., Mr. Dennis, Mr. Congreve, And other Eminent Men of th' Age. By Several Gentlemen and Ladies*, London, 1694, pages 41–4. This volume was reissued, with a new title-page, in 1696; for the loan of a copy of this edition, I am indebted to Professor H. G. Paul.

The collection contains numerous essays of a critical nature, many of them espousing the cause of 'moderns' against 'ancients' in the controversy then raging, e.g. 'Some Reflections on Mr. Rymer's *Short View of Tragedy*, and an Attempt at a Vindication of Shakespear', 'An Essay at a Vindication of Love in Tragedies, against Rapin and Mr. Rymer', 'An Essay at a Vindication of the Love-Verses of Cowley and Waller', and 'To my Honoured and Ingenious Friend, Mr. Harrington, for the Modern Poets against the Ancients'. The volume was edited by Charles Gildon, whose name is signed to the dedicatory epistle and to five of the essays. He does not appear, however, to have written the letter on Milton. In the text itself the letter concludes with 'Yours, &c.'; in the *Errata* this is corrected to 'Yours, &c., I. I.' The letter which follows in the original, 'To J. H., Esq., In Answer to the Question, Who was the Greatest English-Man?' is similarly signed 'J. J.' I am unable to identify this person with any degree of certainty; and I have therefore assigned the letter, for convenience of reference, to the editor of the collection. For a brief estimate of Gildon's critical work, more adequate than Professor Saintsbury's (*Hist. of Crit.*, ii. 429–30), see D. Nichol Smith, *Eighteenth Century Essays on Shakespeare*, p. xvi.

This letter is one of many important testimonies to the growth of Milton's fame before the famous papers in the *Spectator* (cf. *supra*, ii. 208. 1–4; 296. 18, and note; 308. 17, and note); of

some thirty or forty *loci* which I have noted, perhaps the most interesting are to be found in Dennis's *Advancement and Reformation of Modern Poetry*, 1701, and in his *Grounds of Criticism in Poetry*, 1704. The enlightened patronage of Lord Somers, who is said to have aided Tonson in procuring subscribers to the 1688 edition of *Paradise Lost*, which contained Dryden's famous lines on Milton, was regarded in the next century as highly influential in attracting attention to the poet's work; cf. Armstrong, *Taste*, 1753:

> 'Sunk in dead night the giant Milton lay,
> Till Sommer's hand produc'd him to the day.'

WILLIAM WOTTON (1666–1726)

Wotton's *Reflections upon Ancient and Modern Learning*, 1694, was intended as a reply to Temple's essay on the same theme; the second edition, in 1697, contained the first version of Bentley's famous *Dissertation*; and a *Defense of the Reflections* was appended to the third edition in 1705. Wotton has modelled his book on the similar treatises of Tassoni and Perrault (see the Introduction, p. lxxxix, and *supra*, p. 304). The third volume of Perrault's *Parallèle des Anciens et des Modernes*, which is devoted to Poetry, appeared in 1692; the earlier volumes were reviewed in the first supplement of the *Athenian Mercury* in 1691, and in the *Bibliothèque universelle et historique* in 1693.

Page 202. 34. Juvenal, *Sat.* i. 162–3.

Page 211. 5–7. Wotton refers to the *Dialogus de Causis corruptae Eloquentiae* of Tacitus, which has also been ascribed to Quintilian; it is from this dialogue that he derived the argument (l. 30 sq.) that eloquence cannot flourish without political liberty; cf. the Introduction, p. ci, n. 3.

Page 215. 15. *F. Paul*, i.e. Fra Paolo Sarpi; see *supra*, note to 66. 15.

Page 217. 20. *The Bishop of Meaux*, i.e. Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet (1627–1704).

21. *The Bishop of Nismes*, i.e. Esprit Fléchier (1632–1710).

22. Louis Bourdaloue (1632–1704); see the Introduction, p. xli.

Page 221. 13–16. On Honoré d'Urfé, see note to i. 188. 10. Gautier de Costes, chevalier de La Calprenède (1609?–1663), was the author of several heroic romances, *Cassandre*, 1642–5, *Cléopâtre*, 1647, and *Faramond*, 1661.

18. Antoine Varillas (1624–1696) and Louis Maimbourg (1610–1686), French historians of heresy.

30–1. See ii. 212. 10, and note.

Page 222. 1 sq. *The French Language wants Strength.* Cf. ii. 298. 23–34. Wotton's explanation of the French insistence on rules (l. 5 sq.) anticipates the arguments of romantic criticism; cf. A. W. Schlegel, *Sämmtliche Werke*, ed. Böcking, 1846, v. 7–9.

17 sq. *Sir J. Denham's Comparison*, in the preface to *The Destruction of Troy, an Essay upon the Second Book of Virgils Æneis*, 1656: 'It is a vulgar error, in translating Poets, to affect being *Fidus Interpres* . . . for it is not his business alone to translate Language into Language, but Poesie into Poesie; and Poesie is of so subtile a spirit, that in pouring out of one Language into another, it will all evaporate; and if a new spirit be not added in the transfusion, there will remain nothing but a *Caput mortuum*.'

30. *Monsieur D'Ablancourt*, i. e. Nicolas Perrot d'Ablancourt (1606–1664); on his theory of translation, see the Introduction, pp. lii–liv.

Page 223. 30. *Sanctius*, i. e. Francisco Sanchez (1523–1601), 'the Descartes of grammarians,' author of *Minerva, seu de Causis Linguae Latinae Commentarius*, Salamanca, 1587; ed. Scioppius, Padua, 1663.

Page 224. 1. *Scioppius*, i. e. Caspar Schoppe (1576–1649), the celebrated German philologian, author of *Grammatica Philosophica, sive Institutiones Grammaticae Latinae*, 1628.

1. Gerhard John Vossius (1577–1649); his works were collected by his son, Isaac, in six volumes, Amsterdam, 1695–1701.

5. *Caninius*, i. e. Angelo Canini (1521–1557), author of a *Grammatica Graeca* and other works.

5. Nicholas Clenard, or Cleynaerts (1495–1542), Dutch humanist, author of *Institutiones Linguae Graecae*, 1530.

Page 225. 9. John Wallis (1616–1703), the mathematician; his *English Grammar* appeared in 1652.

26–7. The Dictionary of the French Academy was pub-

lished in August, 1694, but separate sheets of it had been circulating for some time, and a first part had been published as a specimen in 1687.

27. The *Remarques sur la Langue françoyse* of Claude Favre, seigneur de Vaugelas, appeared in 1647.

27. Bouhours published his *Doutes sur la Langue françoise* and his *Remarques nouvelles sur la Langue françoise* in 1674.

28. Pierre Richelet's *Nouveau Dictionnaire françois* appeared in 1680, and Antoine Furetière's *Dictionnaire universel* in 1690.

Page 226. 9. John Wilkins (1614–1672), bishop of Chester; cf. the Introduction, p. xliii. His *Essay towards a real Character and a Philosophical Language*, 1668, was partly based on George Dalgarno's *Ars Signorum*, 1661.

SIR RICHARD BLACKMORE (*d.* 1729)

Blackmore's preface to *Prince Arthur*, 1695, is chiefly significant for its attack on the indecency of Restoration comedy (pp. 229–34); he returned to the attack in the preface to *King Arthur*, 1697, in which he celebrated Congreve's *Mourning Bride* as a model of dramatic propriety. His epic theory tamely reproduces that of Le Bossu, but neither his theory nor his practice seemed orthodox enough to Dennis, who censured both in the *Remarks on a Book, entituled Prince Arthur, an Heroick Poem*, 1696. Further goading on the part of the Wits moved Blackmore to write his *Satyr against Wit*, 1700, which has seemed to me worth reproducing here as a curiosity of criticism; the personal and topical allusions become intelligible if the poem is read in connexion with the various replies to it (see the Introduction, p. lxxxvii, n. 3) and with Garth's *Dispensary*, which had appeared in the previous year and had ridiculed Blackmore and his friends. I have identified all the names printed in an abbreviated form in the original.

A SATYR AGAINST WIT

Who can forbear, and tamely silent sit,
And see his Native Land undone by Wit?
Boast not, *Britannia*, of thy happy Peace;
What if Campaigns and Sea-Engagements cease?
Wit a worse Plague does mightily encrease.
Some monstrous Crimes to Ages past unknown
Have surely pull'd this heavy Judgment down.
Fierce Insect-Wits draw out their noisy Swarms,
And threaten Ruin more than Foreign Arms.
O'er all the Land the hungry Locusts spread,
Gnaw every plant, taint every flowry Bed,
And crop each budding Virtue's tender Head.

How happy were the old unpolished Times,
As free from Wit as other modern Crimes!
As our Forefathers Vig'rous were and Brave,
So they were Virtuous, Wise, Discreet, and Grave,
Detesting both alike the Wit and Knave.
They justly Wits and Fools believ'd the same,
And Jester was for both the common Name.
Their Minds, for Empire form'd, would never quit
Their noble Roughness, and dissolve in Wit.
For Business born, and bred to Martial Toil,
They rais'd the Glory of *Britannia*'s Isle.
Then she her dreadful Ensigns did advance,
To curb *Iberia*, and to conquer *France*,
But this degenerate, loose, and foolish Race
Are all turn'd Wits, and their great Stock debase.
Our Learning daily sinks, and Wit is grown
The senseless Conversation of the Town.
Enervated with this, our Youth have lost
That stubborn Virtue which we once could boast
The Plague of Wit prevails; I fear 'tis vain
Now to attempt its Fury to restrain.
It takes Men in the Head, and in the Fit
They lose their Senses and are gone in Wit.
By various ways their Frenzy they express:
Some with loose Lines run haring to the Press,
In Lewdness some are Wits, some only Wits in Dress;
Some, seiz'd like *Gravar*, with Convulsions strain
Always to say fine Things, but strive in vain,
Urg'd with a dry *Tenesmus* of the Brain.

Had but the People scar'd with Danger run
To shut up *Wills*, where first this Plague begun;
Had they the first infected Men convey'd
Strait to *Moorfields*, the Pest-house for the Head,

The wild Contagion might have been supprest,
Some few had fal'n, but we had sav'd the rest.
An Act like this had been a good Defence
Against our great Mortality of Sense.
But now th'Infection spreads, the Bills run high,
At the last Gasp of Sense ten thousand ly.
We meet fine Youth in every House and Street,
With all the deadly Tokens out of Wit.

Vannine, that look'd on all the Danger past,
Because he scap'd so long, is seiz'd at last.
By Pox and Hunger and by *D⟨ryde⟩n* bit,
He grins and snarles, and in his dogged Fit
Froths at the Mouth, a certain Sign of Wit.

Craper runs madly midst the sickest Crowd,
And fain would be infected, if he cou'd.
Under the Means he lies, frequents the Stage,
Is very leud, and does at Learning rage.
Pity that so much Labour should be lost
By such a healthful Constitution crost.
Against th' Assaults of Wit his Make is proof,
Still his strong Nature works the Poison off.
He still escapes, but yet is wondrous pleas'd
Wit to recite, and to be thought Diseas'd.
So Hypocrites in Vice in this vile Town
To Wickedness pretend, that's not their own.

A Bantring Spirit has our Men possest,
And Wisdom is become a standing Jest.
Wit does of Virtue sure Destruction make;
Who can produce a Wit and not a Rake?
Wise Magistrates leud Wit do therefore hate,
The Bane of Virtue's Treason to the State.
While Honour fails and Honesty decays,
In vain we beat our Heads for Means and Ways.
What well-form'd Government or State can last,
When Wit has laid the Peoples Virtue wast?

The *Mob* of Wits is up to storm the Town,
To pull all Virtue and right Reason down;
Quite to subvert Religion's sacred Fence,
To set up Wit, and pull down common Sense;
Our Libraries they gut, and shouting bear
The Spoils of ruin'd Churches in the Air.
Their Captain *Tom* does at their Head appear,
And *S⟨malwoo⟩d* in his Gown brings up the Rear.
Aloud the Church and Clergy they condemn,
Curse all their Order, and their God blaspheme.

Against all Springs of Learning they declare,
Against Religion's Nurseries, and swear
They will no *All⟨ein?⟩e*, *M⟨i⟩ll*, or *Ch⟨arlet⟩t* spare.
But the leud Crew affirm by all that 's good
They'll ne'er disperse unless they've *B⟨ent⟩l⟨e⟩y*'s Blood.
For that ill-natur'd Critic has undone
The rarest Piece of Wit that e'er was shown,
Till his rude Stroaks had thresh'd the empty Sheaf,
We thought there had been something else than Chaff.
Crown'd with Applause this Master Critic sits,
And round him ly the Spoils of ruin'd Wits.
How great a Man! What Rev'rence were his due,
Could he suppress the Critic's *Fastus* too?
As certain Words will Lunaticks enrage,
Who just before appear'd sedate and sage,
So do but *Lock⟨e⟩* or *Books* or *Bentley* name,
The Wit's in clammy Sweats or in a Flame.

Horror and Shame! What would the Madmen have?
They dig up learned *Bernard*'s peaceful Grave;
The Sacred-Urn of famous *Stillingfleet*
We see prophan'd by the leud Sons of Wit;
The skilful *Ty⟨so⟩n*'s Name they dare invade,
And yet they are undone without his Aid.
Ty⟨so⟩n with base Reproaches they pursue,
Just as his *Moorfields* Patients use to do.
For next to Virtue, Learning they abhor,
Laugh at Discretion, but at Business more.
A Wit 's an idle wretched Fool of Parts,
That hates all Liberal and Mechanick Arts.

Wit does enfeeble and debauch the Mind,
Before to Business or to Arts inclin'd.
How useless is a sauntring empty Wit,
Only to please with Jests at Dinner fit!
What hopeful Youths for Bar and Bench design'd
Seduc'd by Wit have learned *Coke* declin'd!
For what has Wit to do with Sense or Law?
Can that in Titles find or mend a Flaw?
Can Wit supply great *T⟨re⟩by*'s nervous Sense,
Or *S⟨ome⟩r*'s more than *Roman* Eloquence?
Which way has *H⟨o⟩lt* gain'd Universal Fame,
What makes the World thy Praises, *F⟨in⟩ch*, proclaim,
And, charming *P⟨hillip⟩s*, what advanc'd thy Name?
'Twas Application, Knowledge of the Laws,
And your vast Fund of Sense gain'd you Applause.
The Law will ne'er support the bant'ring Breed;
A *Sl⟨oane⟩* may sometimes there, but Wits can ne'er
succeed.

R⟨a⟩t⟨cli⟩ffe has Wit, and lavishes away
More in his Conversation every Day
Than would supply a modern Writer's Play.
But 'tis not that, but the great Master's Skill,
Who with more Ease can cure than *C⟨olbatc⟩h* kill,
That does the grateful Realm with his Applauses fill.

Thy Learning, *G⟨ibbo⟩ns*, and thy Judgment, *H⟨o⟩w⟨e⟩*,
Make you in envy'd Reputation grow.
This drew Invectives on you, all agree,
From the lean Small-craft of your Faculty.
Had you been Wits you had been both secure
From Business, and for Satyr too Obscure,
Ill-natur'd, Arrogant, and very Poor.
But let Invectives still your Names assail;
Your Business is to Cure, and theirs to Rail.
Let 'em proceed and make your Names a Sport
In leud Lampoons, they've Time and Leisure for't.
Despise their Spite; the Thousands whom you raise
From threaten'd Death will bless you all their Days,
And spend the Breath you sav'd, in just and lasting Praise.
But Wit as now 'tis manag'd would undo
The Skill and Virtues we admire in you.
In *G⟨arth⟩* the Wit the Doctor has undone,
In *S⟨malwoo⟩d* the Divine, Heav'ns guard poor *Ad⟨di⟩son.*
An able Senator is lost in *M⟨oy⟩l⟨e⟩*,
And a fine Scholar sunk by Wit in *B⟨oy⟩l⟨e⟩*;
After his foolish Rhimes, both Friends and Foes
Conclude they know who did not write his Prose.

Wit does our Schools and Colleges invade,
And has of Letters vast Destruction made,
Has laid the Muses choicest Gardens wast,
Broke their Inclosures and their Groves defac't.
We strive in Jests each other to exceed,
And shall e'er long forget to Write or Read.
Unless a Fund were settled once that cou'd
Make our deficient Sense and Learning good,
Nothing can be expected, for the Debt
By this loose Age contracted is so great,
To set the Muses mortgag'd Acres free,
Our Bankrupt Sons must sell out-right the Fee.
The present Age has all their Treasure spent,
They can't the Int'rest pay at Five *per Cent.*
What to discharge it can we hope to raise
From *D⟨ur⟩f⟨e⟩y*'s or from Poet *D⟨ryde⟩n*'s Plays,
Or *G⟨ar⟩th*'s Lampoon with little in't but Praise?

O *S⟨om⟩er⟨s⟩, T⟨al⟩bot, D⟨or⟩set, M⟨onta⟩gue,*
Gr⟨e⟩y, Sh⟨effie⟩ld, C⟨aven⟩d⟨i⟩sh, P⟨embro⟩ke, V⟨erno⟩n,
you
Who in *Parnassus* have Imperial Sway,
Whom all the Muses Subjects here obey,
Are in your Service and receive your Pay,
Exert your Soveraign Power, in Judgment sit
To regulate the Nation's Grievance, Wit.
Pity the cheated Folks that every Day
For Copper Wit good Sterling Silver pay.
If once the Muses Chequer would deny
To take false Wit, 'twould lose its currency.
Not a base Piece would pass, that pass'd before
Just wash'd with Wit, or thinly plated o'er.

Set forth your Edict, let it be enjoyn'd
That all defective Species be recoyn'd.
St. E⟨vre⟩m⟨on⟩t and *R⟨yme⟩r* both are fit
To oversee the Coining of our Wit.
Let these be made the Masters of Essay,
They'll every Piece of Metal touch and weigh,
And tell which is too light, which has too much Allay.
'Tis true that when the course and worthless Dross
Is purg'd away, there will be mighty Loss.
Ev'n *C⟨ongrev⟩e, S⟨outher⟩n⟨e⟩, Manly W⟨ycher⟩ly,*
When thus refin'd will grievous Suff'rers be.
Into the melting Pot when *D⟨ryde⟩n* comes,
What horrid Stench will rise, what noisome Fumes!
How will he shrink, when all his leud Allay
And wicked Mixture shall be purg'd away!
When once his boasted Heaps are melted down,
A Chest full scarce will yield one Sterling Crown.
Those who will *D⟨en⟩n⟨i⟩s* melt and think to find
A goodly Mass of Bullion left behind,
Do as th' *Hibernian* Wit, who, as 'tis told,
Burnt his gilt Leather to collect the Gold.

But what remains will be so pure, 'twill bear
Th' Examination of the most severe;
'Twill *S⟨ome⟩r*'s Scales and *T⟨al⟩bot*'s Test abide,
And with their Mark please all the World beside.

But when our Wit's call'd in, what will remain
The Muses learned Commerce to maintain?
How pensive will our Beaus and Ladies sit!
They'll mutiny for want of ready Wit.
That such a failure no Man may incense,
Let us erect a Bank for Wit and Sense;
A Bank whose current Bills may Payment make,
Till new Mill'd Wit shall from the Mint come back.

Let *S⟨om⟩er⟨s⟩*, *D⟨or⟩set*, *Sh⟨effie⟩ld*, *M⟨onta⟩gue*,
Lend but their Names, the Project then will do.
The Bank is fixt if these will under-write,
They pay the vastest Sums of Wit at sight.
These are good Men, in whom we all agree
Their Notes for Wit are good Security:
Duncombs and *Claytons* in *Parnassus* all,
Who cannot sink unless the Hill should fall.
Their Bills, tho' ne'er supported by Trustees,
Will through *Parnassus* circulate with ease.
If these come in, the Bank will quickly fill,
All will be scrambling up *Parnassus* Hill.
They'll crowd the Muses Hall and throng to write
Great Sums of Wit, and will be Gainers by't.

V⟨anbrugh⟩e and *C⟨ongrev⟩e* both are Wealthy; they
Have Funds of Standard-Sense, need no Allay,
And yet mix'd Metal oft they pass away.
The Bank may safely their Subscriptions take,
But let 'em, for their Reputation's sake,
Take care their Payments they in Sterling make.

Codron will under-write his *Indian* Wit,
Far-fetch'd indeed, so 'twill the Ladies fit.
By Hearsay he's a Scholar, and they say
The Man's a sort of Wit too in his way.

Let 'em receive whatever *P⟨rio⟩r* brings;
In nobler Strains no happy Genius sings.
'Tis Complaisance when to divert his Friends
He to *facetious Fancies* condescends.

T⟨at⟩e will subscribe, but set no Payment-Day;
For his slow Muse you must with Patience stay;
He's honest, and as Wit comes in, will pay.

But how would all this new Contrivance Prize,
How high in value would their Actions rise?
Would *Fr⟨ea⟩k⟨e⟩* engraft his solid, manly Sense,
His Learning *L⟨oc⟩k⟨e⟩*, *Fl⟨eetwoo⟩d* his Eloquence?
The Bank when thus establish'd will supply
Small Places for the little, loitt'ring Fry
That follow *G⟨ar⟩th*, or at *Will Ur⟨win⟩*'s ply.
Their Station will be low, but ne'ertheless
For this Provision they should Thanks express:
'Tis sad to be a Wit and Dinnerless.

T⟨onso⟩n, the great Wit-Jobber of the Age,
And all the Muses Broakers will engage
Their several Friends to cry the Actions up,
And all the railing Mouths of Envy stop.

Ye Lords, who o'er the Muses Realm preside,
Their Int'rests manage and their Empire guide,
Regard your Care, regard the sacred State
Laid by Invaders wast and desolate.
Tartars and *Scythians* have in barb'rous Bands
Riffled the Muses and o'er-run their Lands.
The Native Subjects who in Peace enjoy'd
The happy Seat are by the Sword destroy'd.
Gardens and Groves *Parnassus* did adorn,
Condemn'd to Thistles now, and curst with Thorn.
Instead of Flowers and Herbs of wholsom use,
It does rank Weeds and pois'nous Plants produce,
Fitter to be for *Witches* a Retreat,
Owls, *Satyrs*, *Monkies*, than the Muses Seat.
Ev'n these, debauch'd by *D⟨ryde⟩n* and his Crew,
Turn Bawds to Vice and wicked Aims pursue.
Therefore some just and wholesome Laws ordain,
That may this wild Licentiousness restrain.
To Virtue and to Merit have regard;
To punish learn; you know how to reward.

Let those Correction have, and not Applause,
That Heav'n affront and ridicule its Laws.
No sober Judge will Atheism e'er permit
To pass for Sense, or Blasphemy for Wit.
Declare that what's Obscene shall give Offence,
Let want of Decency be want of Sense. Roscom⟨mon⟩.

Send out your Guards to scow'r the Ways and seize
The Footpads, Outlaws, Rogues, and Rapparees,
That in the Muses Country rob and kill,
And make *Parnassus* worse than *Shooter*'s Hill.
Poetic Justice should on these be shown,
Or soon the Muses State must be undone.
For now an honest Man can't peep abroad,
And all chast Muses dread the dangerous Road.
If in *Parnassus* any *needy Wit*
Should filch and Petty Larceny commit,
If he should riffle Books and Pilferer turn,
An Inch beside the Nose the *Felon* burn.
Let him distinguish'd by this Mark appear,
And in his Cheek a plain *Signetur* wear.

Chastise the Poets who our Laws invade,
And hold with *France* for Wit an Owling Trade.
Felonious *G⟨arth⟩*, pursuing this Design,
Smuggles *French* Wit, as others Silks and Wine;
But let his Suff'rings doubly be severe,
For he both steals it there, and runs it here.

Condemn all those who 'gainst the Muses Laws
Sollicit Votes, and canvas for Applause.
When *Torman* writes, he rattles up and down,
And makes what Friends he can, to make the Town.
By Noise and Violence they force a Name,
For this leud Town has *Setters* too for Fame.
It is not Merit now that recommends,
But he's allow'd most Sense that makes most Friends.

In Panegyrick let it be a Rule,
That for the Sense none praise a Wealthy Fool.
D⟨ryde⟩n condemn, who taught Men how to make
Of Dunces Wits, an Angel of a Rake.
By Treats and Gifts our Youth may now commence,
Wits without Brains, and Scholars without Sense.
They cry up *Darfel* for a Wit; to treat
Let him forbear, and they their Words will eat.
Great *Atticus* himself these Men would curse,
Should *Atticus* appear without his Purse.
Of any Price you may bespeak a Name,
For Characters they cut, and retail Fame.
Bounty 's the Measure of a Patron's Mind,
For they have still most Sense that prove most kind.
Fame on Great Men 's a Charge that still goes on,
For Wits, like Scriv'ners, take for *Pro* and *Con*.
Without his Gold what generous *Oran* writ
Had ne'er been Standard, sheer *Athenian* Wit.

Those who by Satyr would reform the Town
Should have some little Merit of their own,
And not be Rakes themselves below Lampoon.
For all their Libels Panegyrick's are,
They're still read backward like a Witch's Pray'r.
Ell⟨iot?⟩t's Reproofs who does not make his Sport?
Who'll e'er repent that *S⟨malwoo⟩d* does exhort?
Therefore let Satyr-Writers be supprest,
Or be reform'd by cautious *D⟨or⟩set*'s Test.
'Tis only *D⟨or⟩set*'s Judgment can command
Wit, the worst Weapon in a Madman's Hand.
The Biting Things by that great Master said
Flow from rich Sense, but theirs from want of Bread.
Whatever is by them in Satyr writ
Is Malice all, but his, excess of Wit.
To lash our Faults and Follies is his Aim,
Theirs is good Sense and Merit to defame.
In *D⟨or⟩set* Wit (and therefore still 'twill please)
Is Constitution, but in them Disease.

Care should be taken of the Impotent,
That in your Service have their Vigor spent;
They should have Pensions from the Muses State,
Too Old to Write, too Feeble to Translate.
But let the lusty Beggar-Wits that lurk
About the Hill be seiz'd and set to Work.
Besides, some Youths Debauches will commit,
And surfeit by their undigested Wit.
Th' intoxicating Draught they cannot bear,
It takes their Heads before they are aware.
Weak Brothers by Excesses, it appears,
Have oft been laid up Months and some whole Years.
By one Debauch a tender Wit was try'd,
And he, 'tis known, was likely to have dy'd.
That neither Sick nor Poor you may neglect,
For all the Muses *Invalids* erect
An Hospital upon *Parnassus* Hill,
And settle Doctors there of Worth and Skill.
This Town can numbers for your Service spare,
That live obscure and of Success despair.
Fracar has many sour Invectives said,
And Jests upon his own Profession spred,
And with good Reason, 'twill not find him Bread.
And some such Doctors sure you may persuade
To labour at th' Apothecary's Trade.
They'll Med'cines make, and at the Mortar sweat;
Let 'em pound Drugs, they have no Brains to beat.

Page 227. 1 sq. These opening paragraphs recall Rymer; see ii. 182 sq., 188, &c., and cf. Le Bossu, *Traité du Poëme épique*, i. 1–2.

Page 229. 5–24. Blackmore is echoing Rapin, *Réflexions sur la Poëtique*, i. 8–10.

25 sq. This attack on Restoration comedy may have been suggested by the reading of Rapin (*Réflexions*, ii. 23): 'It remains to speak of Comedy, that of a Lecture of virtue, which it is essentially, is become by the licentiousness of these latter Times a School of debauchery; 'tis only to re-establish it in its natural estate, as it ought to be, according to Aristotle, that I pretend to speak. The rest I leave to the zeal of the Preachers, who are a little slack on this subject.'

Page 234. 30 sq. Victorius (Pier Vettori, 1499–1585) published his edition of Aristotle's *Poetics* at Florence in 1560; annotated editions by Robortelli (1548) and Maggi (1550) had

preceded it, and others by Castelvetro (1570), Piccolomini (1575), and Beni (1613) followed. Blackmore is echoing Rapin (*Réflexions sur la Poëtique*, preface, and i. 11); see note to ii. 163. 15. On these early editions of the *Poetics*, see my *Lit. Crit. in the Ren.*, pp. 137–40. It is not true that Tasso ignored the Aristotelian 'rules'; and Blackmore, doubtless aware of his error, recast this passage in the 1696 edition of *Prince Arthur*.

Page 235. 9 sq. All this merely reproduces Le Bossu. His definition (i. 3) is: 'L'Épopée est un discours inventé avec art, pour former les mœurs par des instructions déguisées sous les allégories d'une action importante, qui est racontée en Vers d'une manière vraisemblable, divertissante, & merveilleuse.'

16. *De Fin.* i. 65, 'fictae fabulae.'

31. Strabo commends poetry as a popular form of instruction in the first book of the *Geography*, and Plutarch in the *De Audiendis Poetis*: cf. Butcher, *Aristotle's Theory of Poetry ana Fine Art*, ch. v.

Page 237. 32 sq. *The Action must be related in an Allegorical manner*, &c. This is Le Bossu's rule, but allegory had been part and parcel of modern epic theory from Tasso's day to Chapelain's; cf. note to i. 8. 20.

Page 239. 26 sq. *Some of our modern Criticks*, &c. See *supra*, note to 99. 9–15. In the preface to the *Remarks on Prince Arthur*, Dennis contends that 'all Mr. Blackmore's Celestial Machines, as they cannot be defended so much as by common receiv'd opinion, so they are directly contrary to the Doctrine of the Church of England'!

Page 241. 4. Aristotle, *Poet.* xxiii. 3, 4.

9–10. The *Cypria* is mentioned in Herodotus, ii. 117, Athenaeus, viii. 334 b, xv. 682 e, and Pausanias, *Descr. Graec.* iii. 16. 1, iv. 2. 7, x. 26. 1, 4.

WILLIAM CONGREVE (1670–1729)

This letter has been transcribed from *Letters upon severa. Occasions: Written by and between Mr. Dryden, Mr. Wycherly, Mr. ——, Mr. Congreve, and Mr. Dennis. Published by Mr. Dennis. With a New Translation of Select Letters of Monsieur Voiture*, London, 1696, pages 80–96.

PAGE 242. 4–6. *There is more of Humour in our English Writers.* See *supra*, 196. 27–9, and note; 103. 14–27, and note.

20. *Contained.* Orig. 'continued.'

PAGE 245. 12 sq. This refers to two letters of Dennis, addressed to Congreve, which precede this one in the same collection.

PAGE 252. 18. *Agree.* Qu. 'argue'?

JEREMY COLLIER (1650–1726)

Collier's *Short View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the English Stage, together with the Sense of Antiquity upon this Argument* appeared in 1698; the preface is dated March 5, 1697–8. It went through several editions, and was translated into French in 1715 (see the review in the *Journal de Trévoux*, July, 1716). On the controversy which it provoked, and on various problems suggested by the book itself, see the Introduction, pp. lxxxi–lxxxvii.

The book contains six chapters, the first on the immodesty of the Restoration stage, the second on its profaneness, the third on its abuse of the clergy, the fourth on its encouragement of immorality; the fifth contains critiques of Dryden's *Amphitryon* and *King Arthur*, Tom Durfey's *Comical History of Don Quixote*, and Vanbrugh's *Relapse*; and the final chapter reviews the ancient and mediaeval arguments against the theatre. Of these, the whole of the fourth chapter has been included here, as well as the third section of the fifth chapter, devoted to a critical discussion of the *Relapse*: these essays, which are complete in themselves and lose little if anything by separation from the rest of the book, give a representative and wholly adequate idea of the whole. The fourth chapter is concerned with the following contemporary plays: Dryden's *Mock Astrologer*, *Spanish Friar*, *Don Sebastian*, *King Arthur*, *Oedipus*, and *Love Triumphant*, Wycherley's *Country Wife* and *Plain Dealer*, Congreve's *Old Bachelor*, *Love for Love*, and *Double-Dealer*, Vanbrugh's *Relapse* and *Provoked Wife*, Durfey's *Don Quixote*, and Otway's *Orphan*. It will be observed that Collier follows the arguments of Blackmore (*supra*, pp. 229–34) pretty closely.

Page 260. 5 marg. Molière's *Psyché*, 1671, in which Corneille, Quinault, and Lully also had a share, is not a comedy: it is an 'opera', or, as Molière himself called it, a 'tragédie-ballet'.

Page 262. 15 marg. *The London Prodigall* is one of the Shakespearean apocrypha: it bore Shakespeare's name in full on the title-page in 1605, and was included in the third folio in 1664.

Page 275. 24 marg. *L'Ombre de Moliere.* This comedy, by Guillaume Marcoureau de Brécourt, was acted and published in 1674, and was included in several collections of Molière's *Œuvres* between 1675 and 1682.

Page 276. 11. *The Relapse shall follow Don Quixot.* The section preceding this in the original is devoted to a discussion of Tom Durfey's *Comical History of Don Quixote.*

18 sq. Note how closely Collier follows Rymer's method. He begins by summarizing the plot of the *Relapse* (cf. ii. 189, 220), then finds fault with the title (cf. ii. 190), deduces an ironical moral from the plot (cf. ii. 221), and proceeds to tear the play to pieces in accordance with Rymer's methods and Rymer's standards.

Page 283. 28. *Mary the Buxsome*, a character in Durfey's *Don Quixote.*

Page 290. 4. Juliana Cox was tried and executed for witchcraft in 1663; for an account of her, see Glanvill's *Saducismus Triumphatus*, ed. 1681, pt. ii, p. 191 sq.

7. *Titus at Walton Town, and Titus at Islington.* This is apparently from the ballad of *Titus Telltroth*, *c.* 1678, occasioned by the infamous plot of Titus Oates (Wilkins, *Political Ballads of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, 1860, i. 208):

'Titus at Wotton in May,
To Titus at Islington;
And Titus the self-same day,
Both here and there again.'

Page 291. 18, and marg. Philippe Avril's *Voyage en divers États d'Europe et d'Asie* appeared at Paris in 1692; an account of the Academy for the training of bears at Samourgan in Lithuania will be found on p. 286 of that edition, or in the English translation, *Travels into divers Parts of Europe and Asia*, 1693, bk. iv, p. 49.

GEORGE GRANVILLE, LORD LANSDOWNE (1667–1735)

The source of the text is *A New Miscellany of Original Poems on Several Occasions, Written by the E. of D., Sir Charles Sidley, Sir Fleetw. Shepheard, Mr. Wolsely, Mr. Granvill, Mr. Dryden, Mr. Stepney, Mr. Rowe, And several other Eminent Hands, Never before Printed* (edited by Gildon), London, 1701, pp. 311–22. In some later editions the poem and the annotations are considerably altered and extended, and in Lansdowne's *Poems upon Several Occasions*, 1712, the annotations are entirely omitted. Gildon included a brief commentary on the poem in his *Laws of Poetry*, 1721.

Lansdowne has borrowed freely from Bouhours's *La Manière de bien penser dans les Ouvrages d'Esprit*, 1687, or, as Oldmixon euphemistically phrases it, 'The Honourable Author had certainly read Père Bouhours, and improv'd his own Thoughts by that learned Jesuit's' (*The Arts of Logick and Rhetorick*, a paraphrase of Bouhours, London, 1728, p. 240). The fact is that Lansdowne's poem is virtually a *résumé* of the French work, and his prose annotations are in part literally translated from it. In 1694, James Wright had modelled his *Country Conversations* on the same work; but Addison's characterization of Bouhours, in the 62nd *Spectator*, as 'the most penetrating of all the French critics', considerably increased his prestige in England, and as late as April 14, 1747, Chesterfield uses much the same language in writing to his son.

Page 294. 1. This couplet is not from Ariosto, but from Berni's *rifacimento* of Boiardo's *Orlando Innamorato*, liii. 60:

> 'Così colui, del colpo non accorto,
> Andava combattendo ed era morto.'

These lines are cited in a slightly altered form by Bouhours (*op. cit.*, ed. 1695, p. 17), and attributed to Ariosto; the couplet in this form has a sort of proverbial currency in Italy, and Bouhours probably came across it in this way. Professor Pio Rajna, to whose kindness I owe this suggestion, notes that as the lines are not in Boiardo, but were added by Berni for

comic effect, to cite them as an illustration of an 'unnatural flight' is wholly beside the mark.

7. *The Roman Wit*, i.e. Lucan; see *infra*, note to 296. 34.

Page 295. 3. In some later editions of the poem Lansdowne transposed the names in this line, and assigned the priority to Mulgrave's *Essay upon Poetry*:

'First Mulgrave rose, Roscommon next, like light.'

Roscommon's *Essay on Translated Verse* had circulated in manuscript for several years before its publication.

Page 295. 19 — 296. 23. This passage is borrowed from Bouhours (*op. cit.*, pp. 13–14, 21–22, 31–32): 'A la vérité le monde fabuleux, qui est le monde des Poètes, n'a rien en soy de réel: c'est l'ouvrage tout pur de l'imagination; & le Parnasse, Apollon, les Muses avec le cheval Pégase, ne sont que d'agréables chimères. Mais ce système estant une fois supposé, tout ce qu'on feint dans l'étenduë du mesme système ne passe point pour faux parmi les Sçavans, sur tout quand la fiction est vraysemblable, & qu'elle cache quelque vérité . . . Quand Homère dit qu'Achille va comme un Lion, c'est une comparaison; mais quand il dit du mesme Héros, *Ce Lion s'élançoit*, c'est une métaphore. Dans la comparaison le Héros ressemble au Lion; dans la métaphore le Héros est un Lion . . . Ces idées métaphoriques ne trompent personne . . . En effet, pouvons-nous douter au regard d'Achille que ce ne soit pour marquer sa force, sa fierté, & son courage qu'Homère le nomme un Lion? . . . Il y a des hyperboles moins hardies, & qui ne vont pas au-delà des bornes, bien qu'elles soient au dessus de la créance commune. Il y en a que l'usage a naturalisées, pour ainsi dire, & qui sont si établies qu'elles n'ont rien qui choque. Homère dit que Nirée est la beauté mesme, & Martial que Zoile n'est pas vicieux, mais le vice mesme. Nous disons tous les jours, en parlant d'une personne tres-sage & tres-vertueuse: *C'est la sagesse, c'est la vertu mesme.* Nous disons encore avec les Grecs & avec les Latins: *Elle est plus blanche que la neige*; *il va plus viste que le vent.* Ces hyperboles, selon Quintilien, mentent sans tromper; & selon Sénèque, elles ramenent l'esprit à la vérité par le mensonge, en faisant concevoir ce

qu'elles signifient, à force de l'exprimer d'une manière qui semble le rendre incroyable.'

Page 296. 11. Homer, *Il.* ii. 671.

12. Martial, *Epig.* xi. 92.

14. Seneca, *De Benefic.* vii. 23.

29. Horace, *A. P.* 188.

34. Lucan, *Phars.* i. 128. Hobbes had already censured this famous line (see ii. 72 sq.), and Bouhours had subjected it to minute critical analysis (*op. cit.*, pp. 5–11).

Page 297. 21–22. From the prologue to the *Rival Ladies*, 1664. Was Phillips thinking of Dryden's couplet when he denied that poetry has its fashions like clothes (ii. 264. 14–27)?

ADDENDA AND CORRIGENDA

VOLUME I.

PAGE lxxx, l. 29. For 'Jeffreys', read 'Jeffrey'.

PAGE lxxxviii, ll. 12-14. For 'not one . . . is concerned', read 'only two or three . . . are concerned'.

PAGE cii, n. 5. For '*Works*, i. 71', read '*Works*, ii. 71'.

PAGE 237 (note to 75. 20). For '1454-98', read '1454-94'.

PAGE 252, l. 11. For 'Adreini's', read 'Andreini'.

VOLUME II.

PAGE 17. 19-30. Davenant's plan of 'proportioning five Books to five *Acts*, & *Canto's* to *Scenes*', was anticipated by Honoré d'Urfé; Davenant doubtless derived the idea from Baro's preface to the fourth part of the *Astrée*, 1627: 'Il [d'Urfé] m'a fait autrefois l'honneur de me communiquer qu'il vouloit faire de toute son œuure vne tragicomedie Pastorale; & que comme nos François ont accoustumé de les disposer en cinq Actes, chasque Acte composé de diuerses Scenes, il vouloit de mesme faire cinq Volumes composez de douze liures, afin que chasque Volume fust pris pour vn acte, & chasque liure pour vne Scene.' Dryden disapproved of this plan in the *Essay of Heroic Plays*, 1672 (Ker, i. 151). On the influence of the French romances during this period, see A. H. Upham's *French Influence in English Literature from the Accession of Elizabeth to the Restoration*, New York, 1908, ch. viii; an authoritative account of pastoral drama and romance may be expected from my colleague, Professor J. B. Fletcher, in his forthcoming volume on *The Pastoral*.

PAGE 210. 12. *Tom Dove*. On this 'four-leg'd Hero of the Bear-Garden', see Dryden, *Works*, ed. Scott-Saintsbury, viii. 480.

PAGE 282 (and note, p. 353). Rochester's *Allusion to Horace* seems to have been printed as a broadside in 1678. In that year, Dryden attacked it in the preface to *All for Love* (Ker, i. 198-200). The reference to Wycherley, whose plays were

first performed between 1672 and 1675, indicates the earliest possible dates.

PAGE 334 (note to 86. 9). After 'Dionysius', insert 'of'.

PAGE 344 (note to 174. 11). *Agellius* is of course an old variant of the name of Aulus Gellius, the author of the *Noctes Atticae*. I cannot understand what Antonio Agelli is doing in that *galère*, except on Sainte-Beuve's principle that 'il n'y a pas de bonne édition sans *errata*'!

PAGE 346 (note to 195. 1 sq.). An even closer parallel to Rymer's discussion of royal 'decorum' may be found in d'Aubignac's *Pratique du Théâtre*, 1657 (*Whole Art of the Stage*, London, 1684, p. 70): 'The Athenians delighted to see upon their Theatre the Cruelties of Kings and the Misfortunes befalling them . . . Whereas quite contrary among us, the respect and love which we have for our Princes cannot endure that we should entertain the Publick with such Spectacles of horrour; we are not willing to believe that Kings are wicked, nor that their Subjects, though with some appearance of ill usage, ought to Rebel against their Power, or touch their Persons, no, not in Effigie; and I do not believe that upon our Stage a Poet could cause a Tyrant to be murder'd with any applause, except he had very cautiously laid the thing: As for example, that the tyrant were an Usurper, and the right Heir should appear', &c.

PAGE 349, last line. For 'Hamsteed', read 'Flamsteed'.

VOLUME III

PAGE 72. 24–29. *A Saying of Alphonsus . . . King of Aragon*, &c. This passage is paraphrased from Melchior de Santa Cruz's *Floresta Española de Apothegmas*, ii. 1. 20 (Salamanca, 1576, p. 21), a popular collection of anecdotes, of which the Hispanic Society of America possesses no less than seventeen editions. Mr. Owen points out that Bacon has incorporated the same saying of King Alfonso in his 97th Apophthegm.

PAGE 215 (note in margin). For '100' read '62'.

PAGE 218 (note in margin). For '71' read '33'.

PAGE 223 (note in margin). For '93' read '55'.

Mr. W. B. Owen is mainly responsible for the Index.

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The following list of authorities, historical and critical, includes (1) the works of the more significant continental critics from 1550 to 1700, with special attention to the age of Boileau in France, and (2) historical monographs and other works which shed light on the history of European criticism in the seventeenth century. The list makes no claim to bibliographical fullness or completeness of detail: the editions are those I have myself used, but whenever necessary the date of original publication is indicated.

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